IRON MAN®

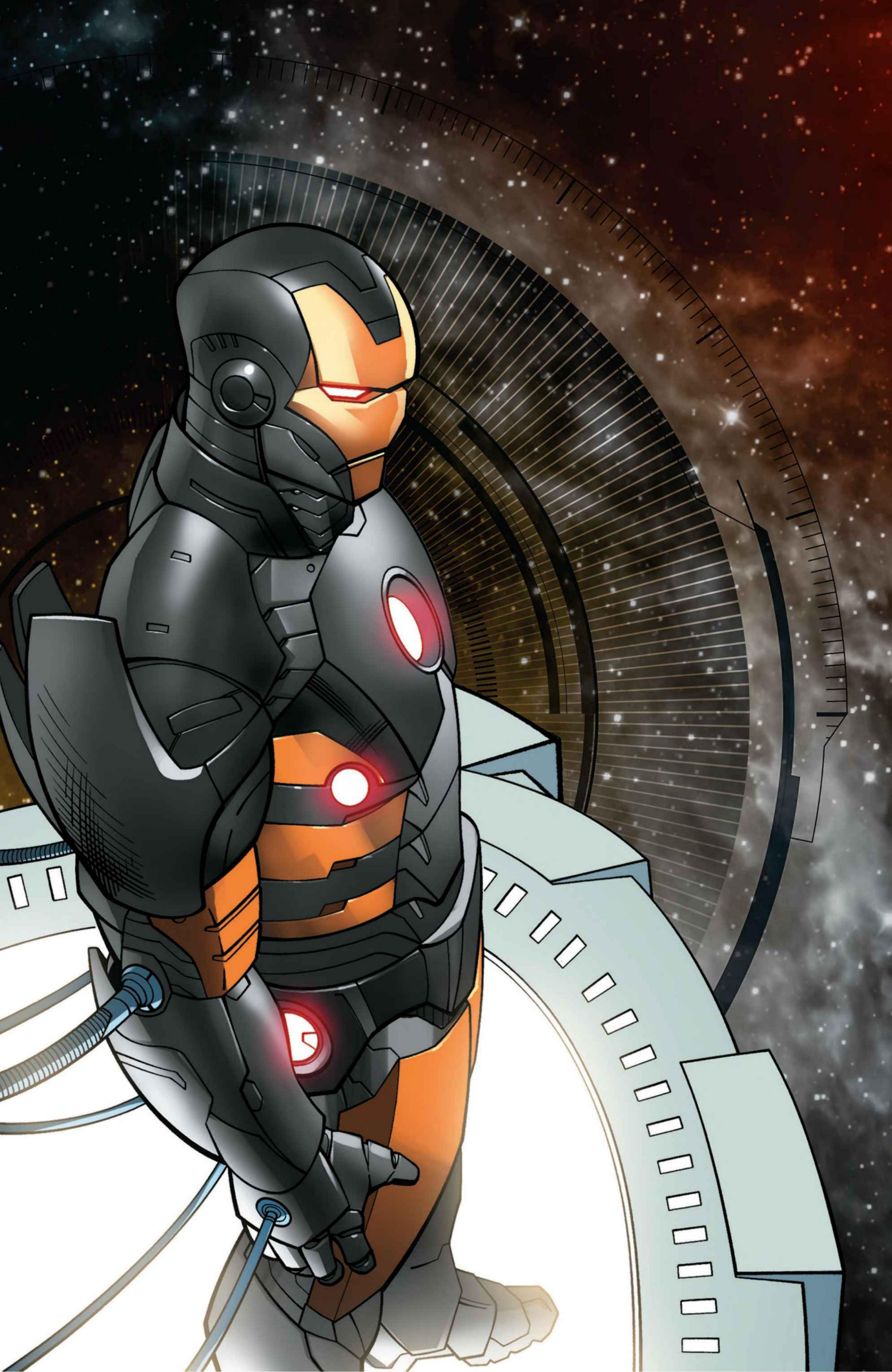
RENAUD
2013
after
LAYTON

FATAL ★★★ FRONTIER

MARVEL

IRON MAN

★ FATAL FRONTIER ★



IRON MAN

★ FATAL FRONTIER ★

STORY: **AL EWING** WITH **KIERON GILLEN**
SCRIPT: **AL EWING**
LAYOUTS: **CARMINE DI GIANDOMENICO** (PP. 5-147),
LAN MEDINA (PP. 148-160), **NEIL EDWARDS** (PP. 161-173)
AND **MAST & GEOFFO** (PP. 174-204)
PENCILERS: **LAN MEDINA** (PP. 5-68, 83-106, 126-137, 148-160 & 174-188)
& **NEIL EDWARDS** (PP. 69-82, 107-125, 138-147, 161-173 & 189-204)

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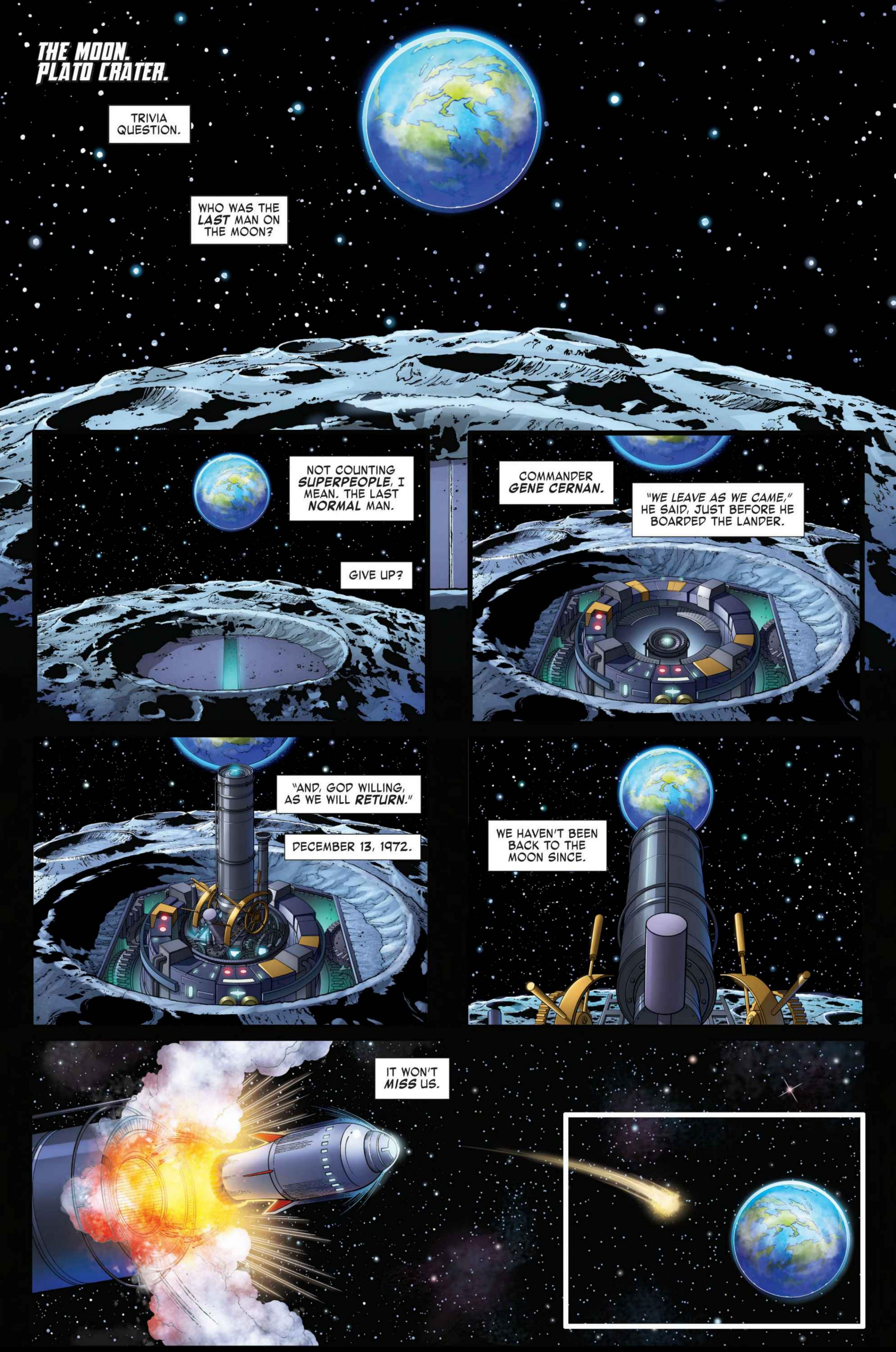
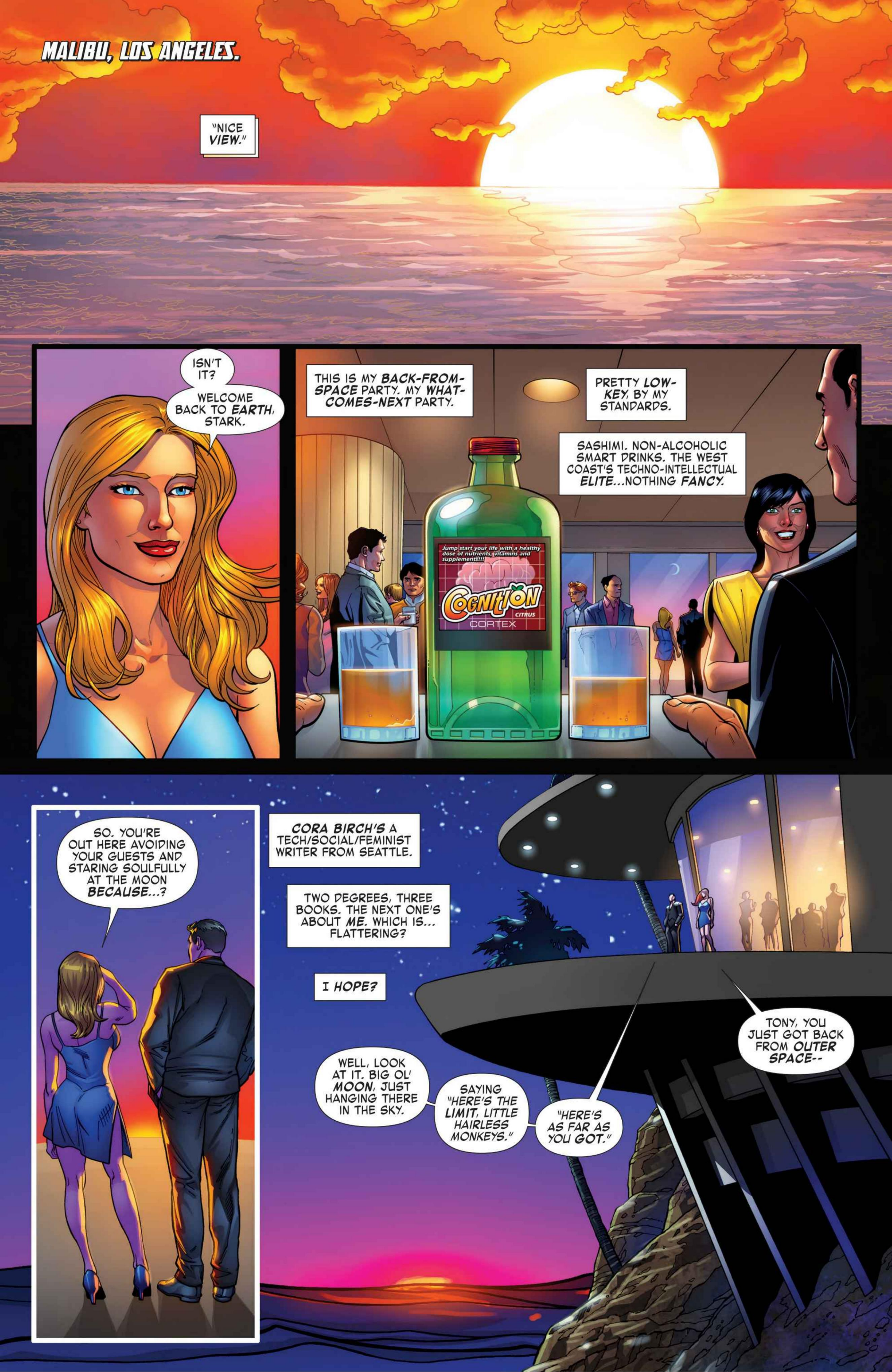
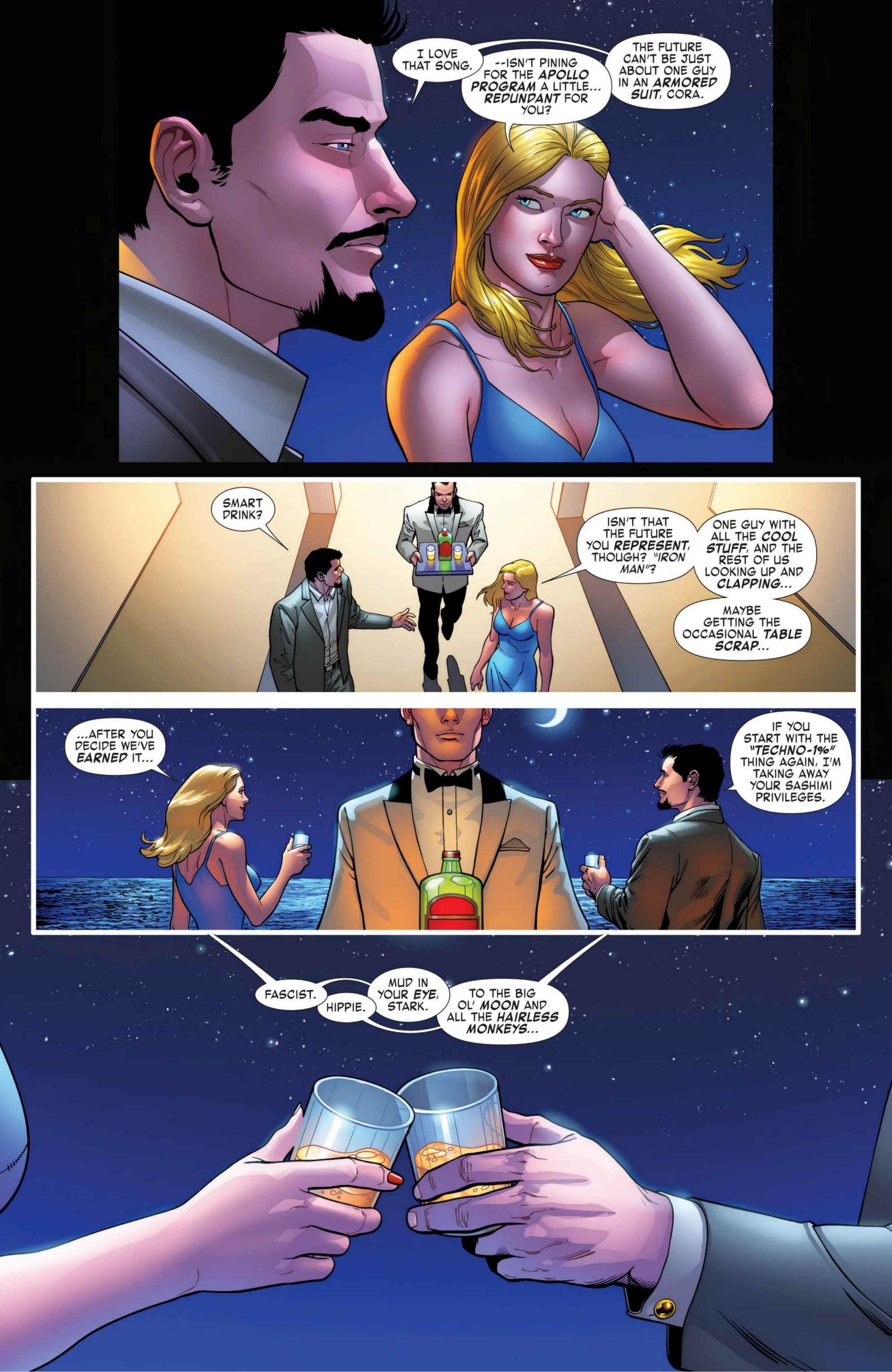
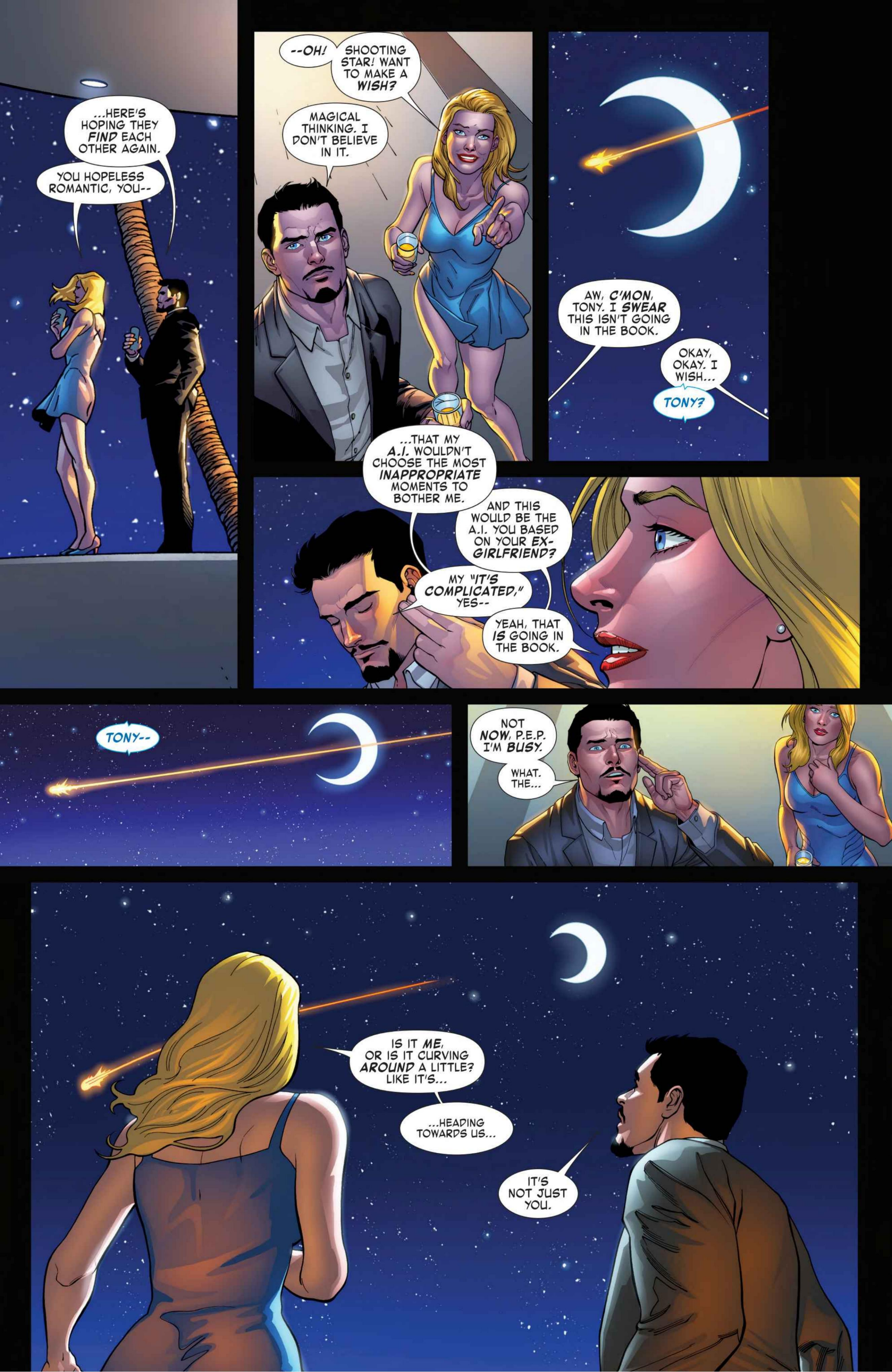
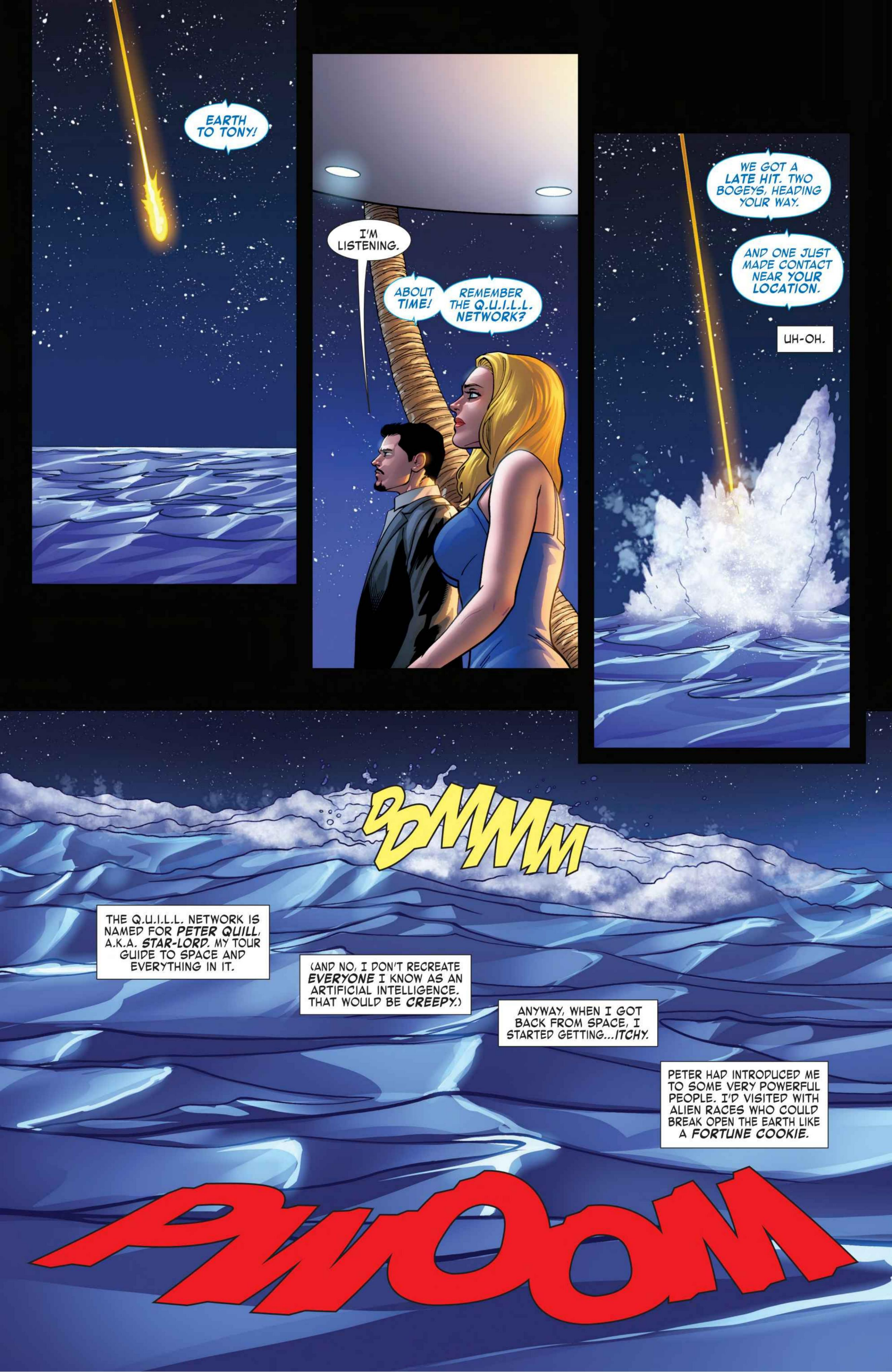
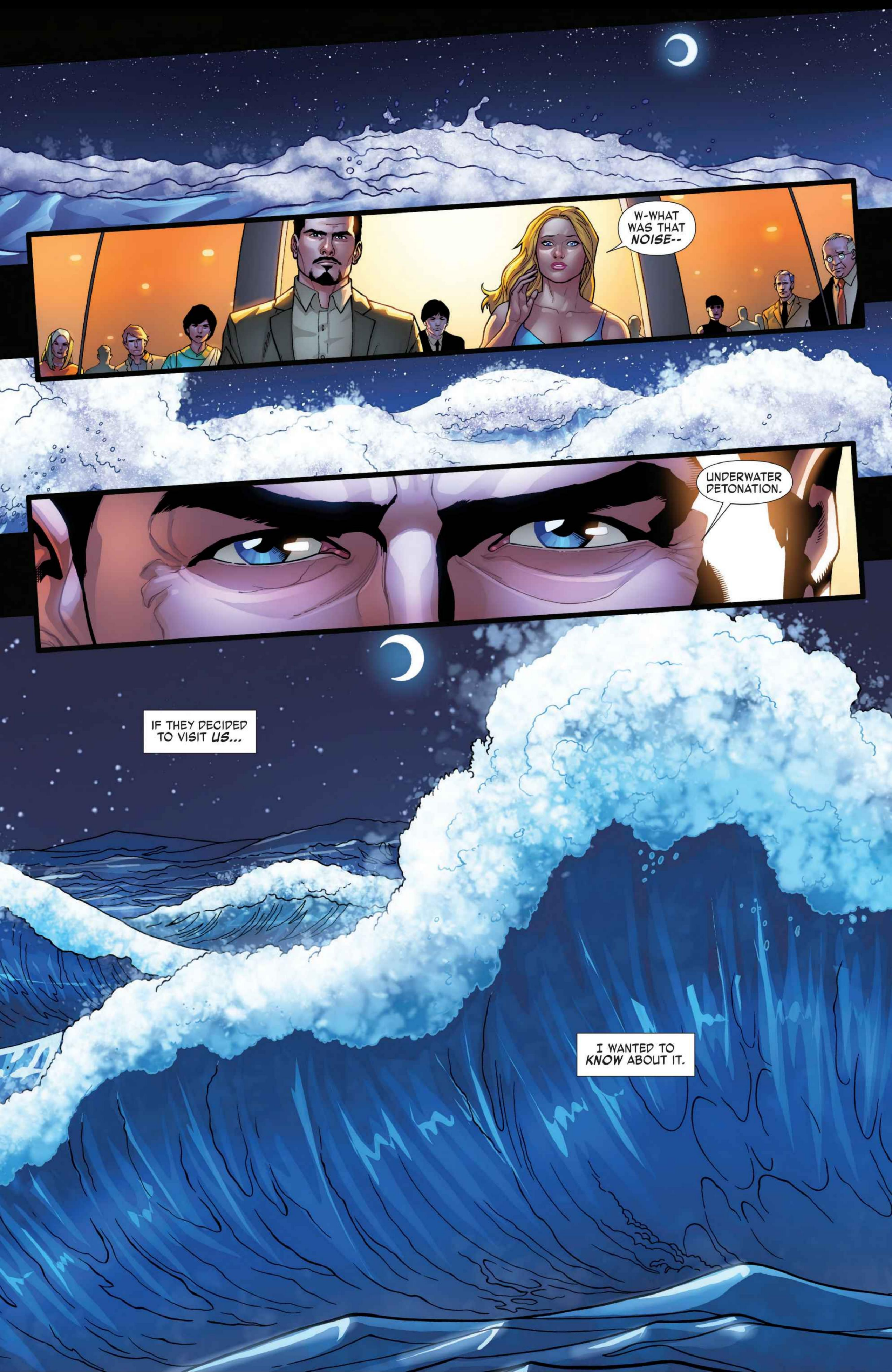

THE MOON.
PLATO CRATER.
TRIVIA QUESTION.
WHO WAS THE *LAST* MAN ON THE MOON?
NOT COUNTING *SUPERPEOPLE*, I MEAN. THE LAST *NORMAL* MAN.
GIVE UP?
COMMANDER *GENE CERNAN.*
"WE LEAVE AS WE CAME," HE SAID, JUST BEFORE HE BOARDED THE LANDER.
"AND, GOD WILLING, AS WE WILL *RETURN*."
DECEMBER 13, 1972.
WE HAVEN'T BEEN BACK TO THE MOON SINCE.
IT WON'T *MISS* US.

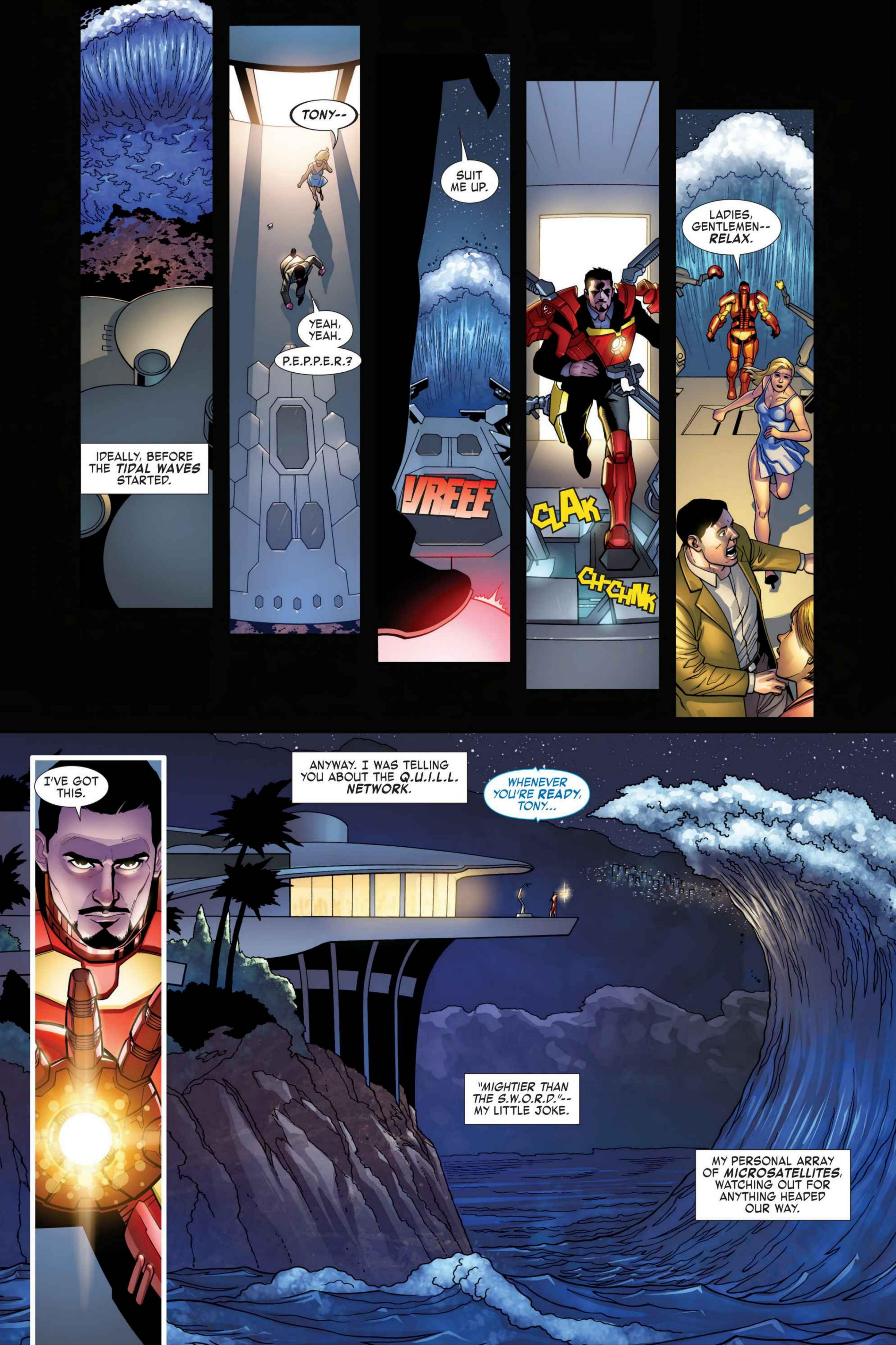

MALIBU, LOS ANGELES.
"NICE VIEW."
ISN'T IT?
WELCOME BACK TO EARTH, STARK.
THIS IS MY BACK-FROM-SPACE PARTY. MY WHAT-COMES-NEXT PARTY.
PRETTY LOW-KEY, BY MY STANDARDS.
SASHIMI. NON-ALCOHOLIC SMART DRINKS. THE WEST COAST'S TECHNO-INTELLECTUAL ELITE...NOTHING FANCY.
Jump start your life with a healthy dose of nutrients, vitamins and supplements!!!
COGNITION
CITRUS
CORTEX
SO. YOU'RE OUT HERE AVOIDING YOUR GUESTS AND STARING SOULFULLY AT THE MOON BECAUSE...?
CORA BIRCH'S A TECH/SOCIAL/FEMINIST WRITER FROM SEATTLE.
TWO DEGREES, THREE BOOKS. THE NEXT ONE'S ABOUT ME. WHICH IS... FLATTERING?
I HOPE?
WELL, LOOK AT IT. BIG OL' MOON, JUST HANGING THERE IN THE SKY.
SAYING "HERE'S THE LIMIT, LITTLE HAIRLESS MONKEYS."
"HERE'S AS FAR AS YOU GOT."
TONY, YOU JUST GOT BACK FROM OUTER SPACE--

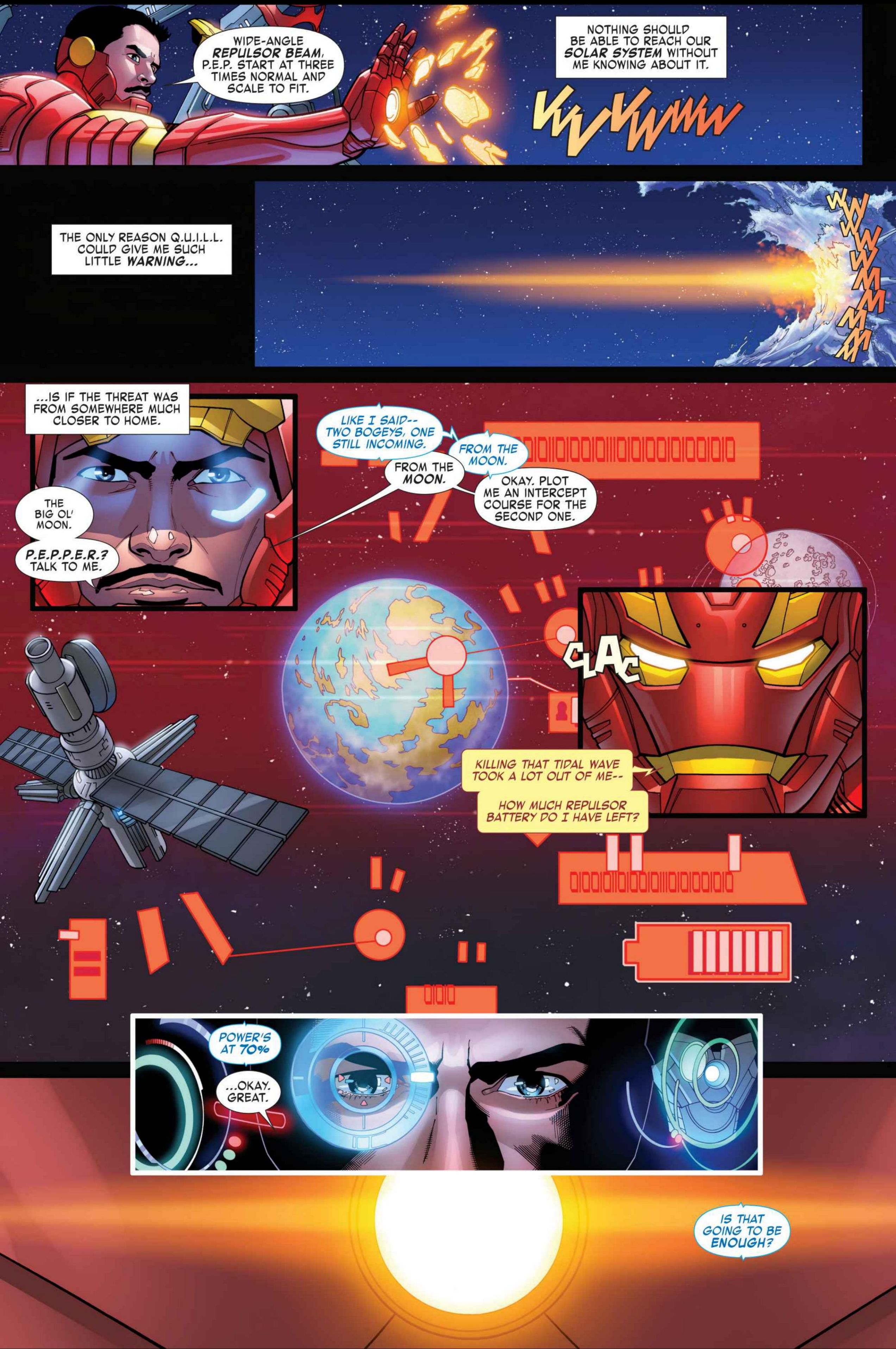

I LOVE THAT SONG.
--ISN'T PINING FOR THE *APOLLO PROGRAM* A LITTLE... *REDUNDANT* FOR YOU?
THE FUTURE CAN'T BE JUST ABOUT ONE GUY IN AN *ARMORED SUIT*, CORA.
SMART DRINK?
ISN'T THAT THE FUTURE YOU *REPRESENT*, THOUGH? *"IRON MAN"*?
ONE GUY WITH ALL THE *COOL STUFF*, AND THE REST OF US LOOKING UP AND *CLAPPING*...
MAYBE GETTING THE OCCASIONAL *TABLE SCRAP*...
...AFTER YOU DECIDE WE'VE *EARNED* IT...
IF YOU START WITH THE *"TECHNO-1%"* THING AGAIN, I'M TAKING AWAY YOUR SASHIMI PRIVILEGES.
FASCIST.
HIPPIE.
MUD IN YOUR *EYE*, STARK.
TO THE BIG OL' *MOON* AND ALL THE *HAIRLESS MONKEYS*...

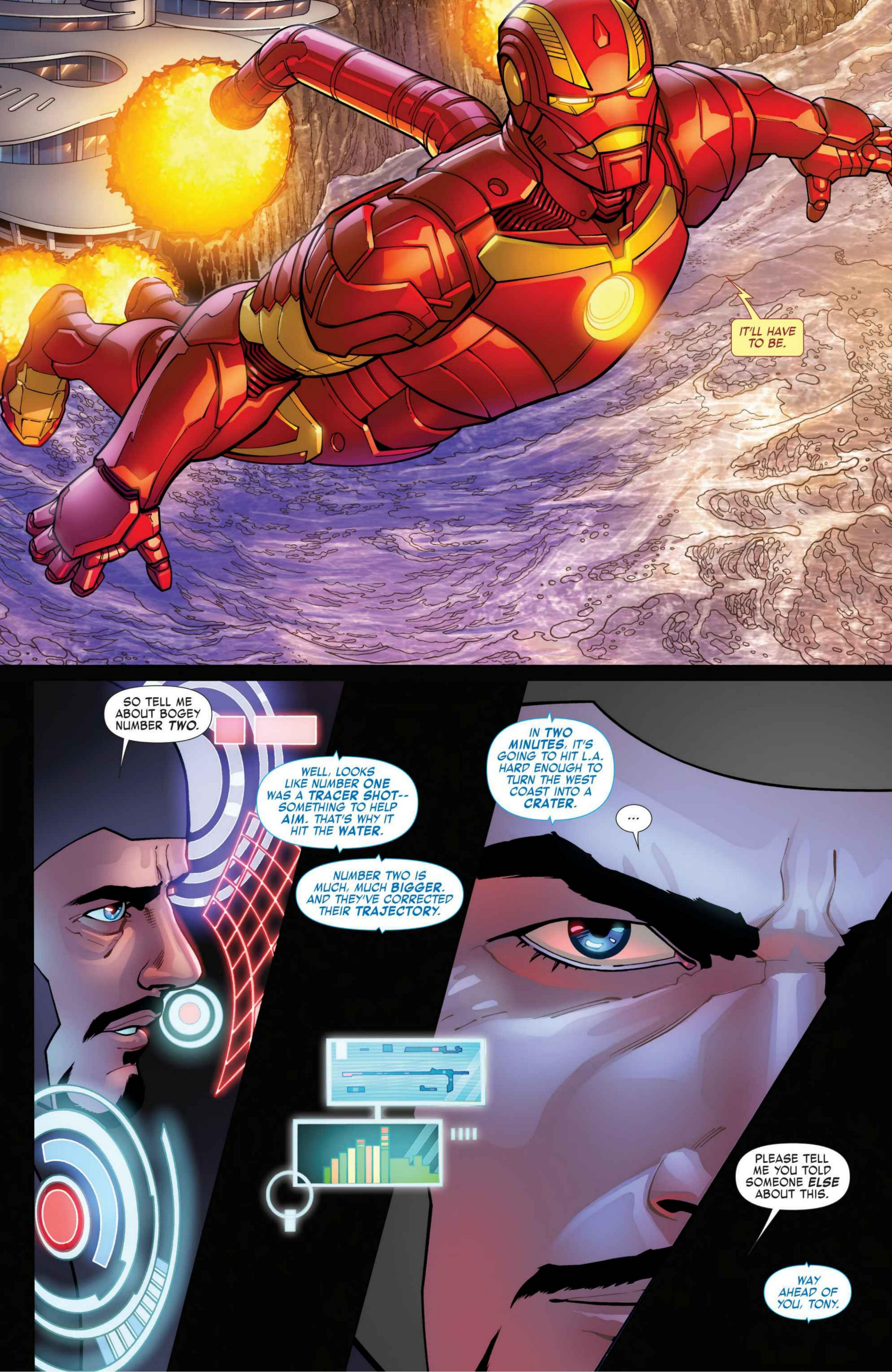

...HERE'S HOPING THEY FIND EACH OTHER AGAIN.
YOU HOPELESS ROMANTIC, YOU--
--OH!
SHOOTING STAR! WANT TO MAKE A WISH?
MAGICAL THINKING. I DON'T BELIEVE IN IT.
AW, C'MON, TONY. I SWEAR THIS ISN'T GOING IN THE BOOK.
OKAY, OKAY. I WISH...
TONY?
...THAT MY A.I. WOULDN'T CHOOSE THE MOST INAPPROPRIATE MOMENTS TO BOTHER ME.
AND THIS WOULD BE THE A.I. YOU BASED ON YOUR EX-GIRLFRIEND?
MY "IT'S COMPLICATED," YES--
YEAH, THAT IS GOING IN THE BOOK.
TONY--
NOT NOW, P.E.P. I'M BUSY.
WHAT. THE...
IS IT ME, OR IS IT CURVING AROUND A LITTLE? LIKE IT'S...
...HEADING TOWARDS US...
IT'S NOT JUST YOU.

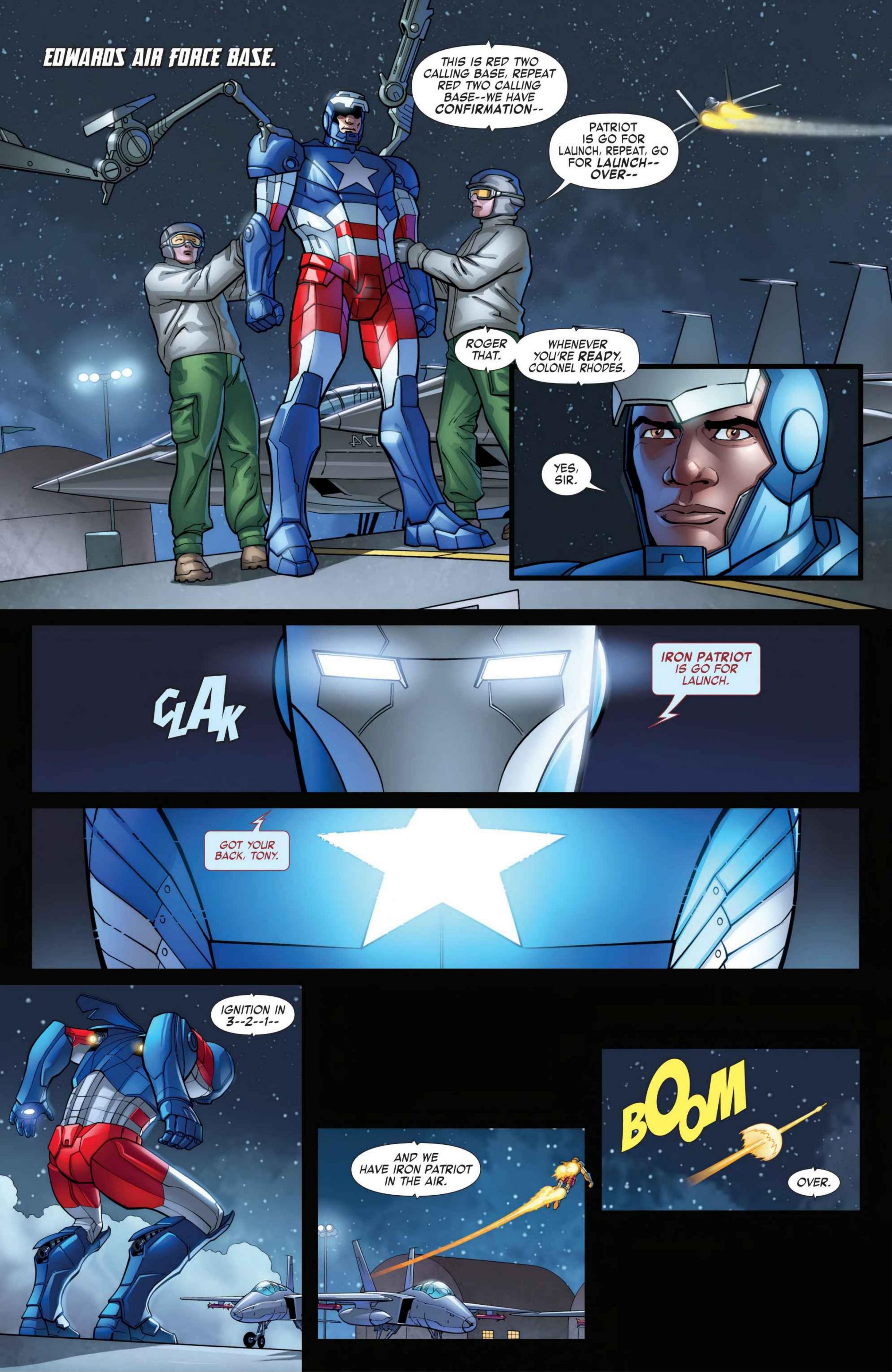

EARTH TO TONY!
I'M LISTENING.
ABOUT TIME!
REMEMBER THE Q.U.I.L.L. NETWORK?
WE GOT A LATE HIT. TWO BOGEYS, HEADING YOUR WAY.
AND ONE JUST MADE CONTACT NEAR YOUR LOCATION.
UH-OH.
BOMMM
THE Q.U.I.L.L. NETWORK IS NAMED FOR PETER QUILL, A.K.A. STAR-LORD. MY TOUR GUIDE TO SPACE AND EVERYTHING IN IT.
(AND NO, I DON'T RECREATE EVERYONE I KNOW AS AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. THAT WOULD BE CREEPY.)
ANYWAY, WHEN I GOT BACK FROM SPACE, I STARTED GETTING...ITCHY.
PETER HAD INTRODUCED ME TO SOME VERY POWERFUL PEOPLE. I'D VISITED WITH ALIEN RACES WHO COULD BREAK OPEN THE EARTH LIKE A FORTUNE COOKIE.
PHOOM

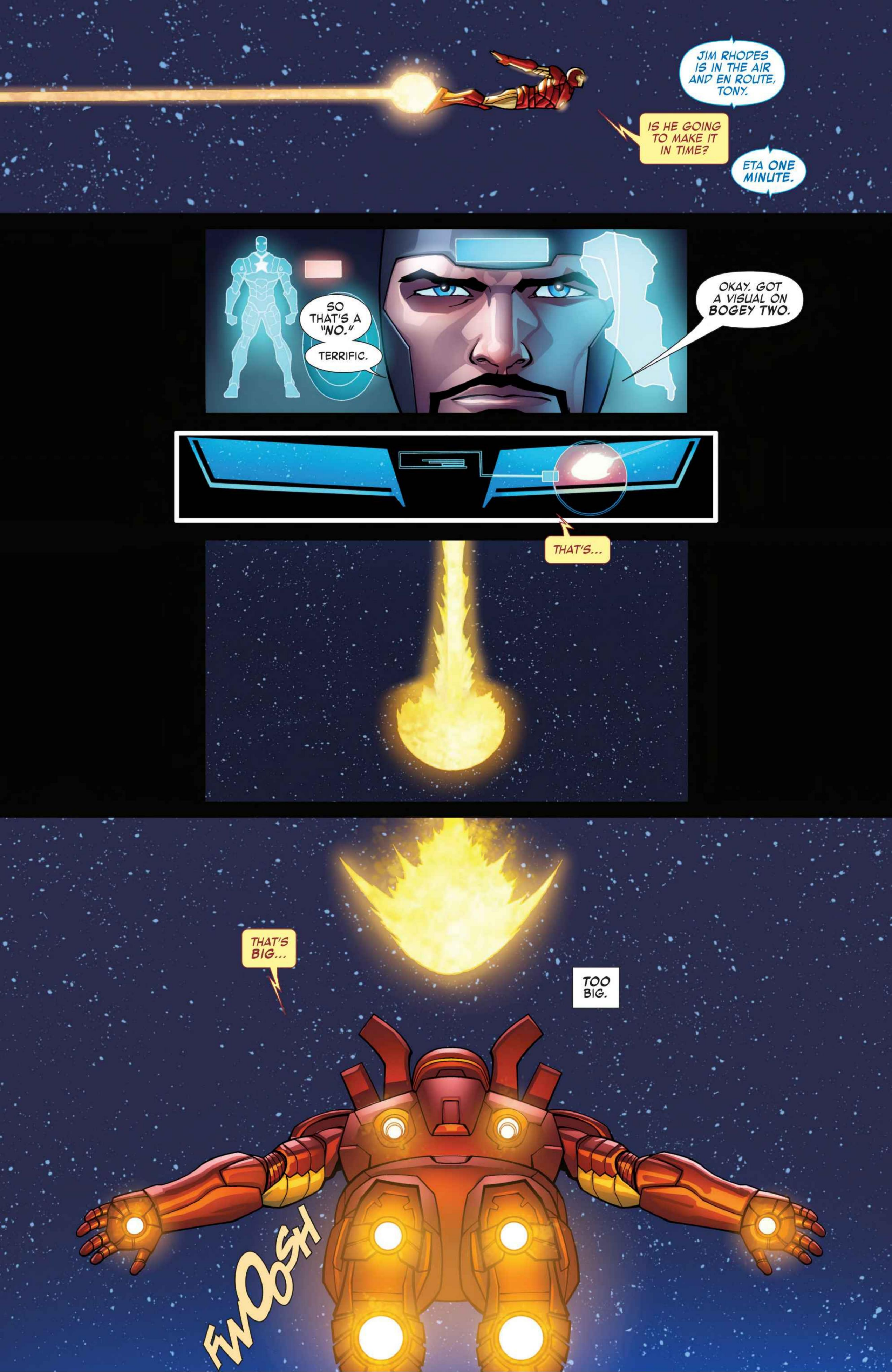

W-WHAT WAS THAT *NOISE*--
UNDERWATER DETONATION.
IF THEY DECIDED TO VISIT *US*...
I WANTED TO *KNOW* ABOUT IT.

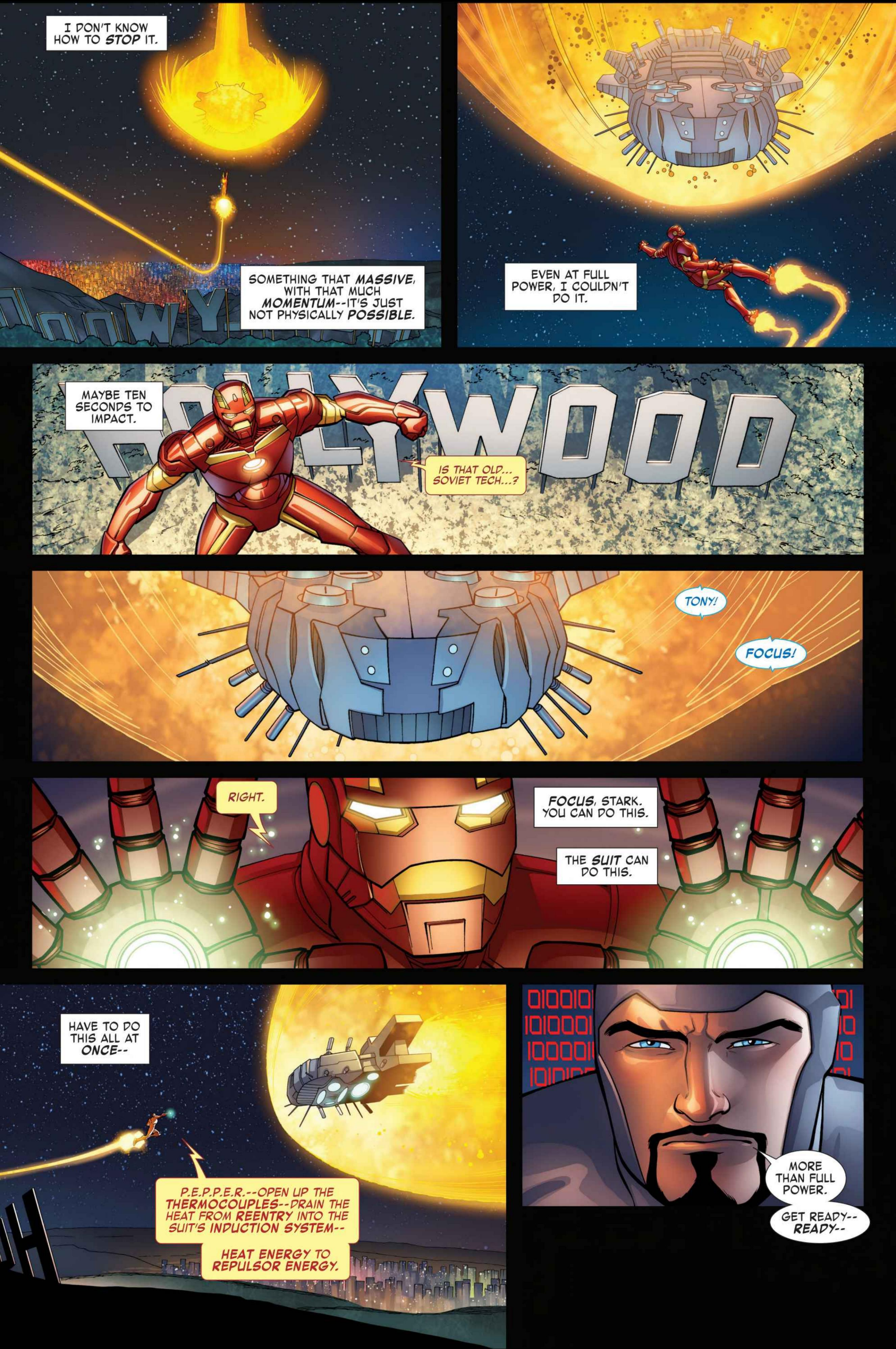

IDEALLY, BEFORE THE *TIDAL WAVES* STARTED.
TONY--
YEAH, YEAH.
P.E.P.P.E.R.?
SUIT ME UP.
VREEE
CLAK
CH-CHNK
LADIES, GENTLEMEN-- **RELAX.**
I'VE GOT THIS.
ANYWAY. I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT THE *Q.U.I.L.L. NETWORK.*
WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, TONY...
"MIGHTIER THAN THE S.W.O.R.D."-- MY LITTLE JOKE.
MY PERSONAL ARRAY OF *MICROSATELLITES,* WATCHING OUT FOR ANYTHING HEADED OUR WAY.

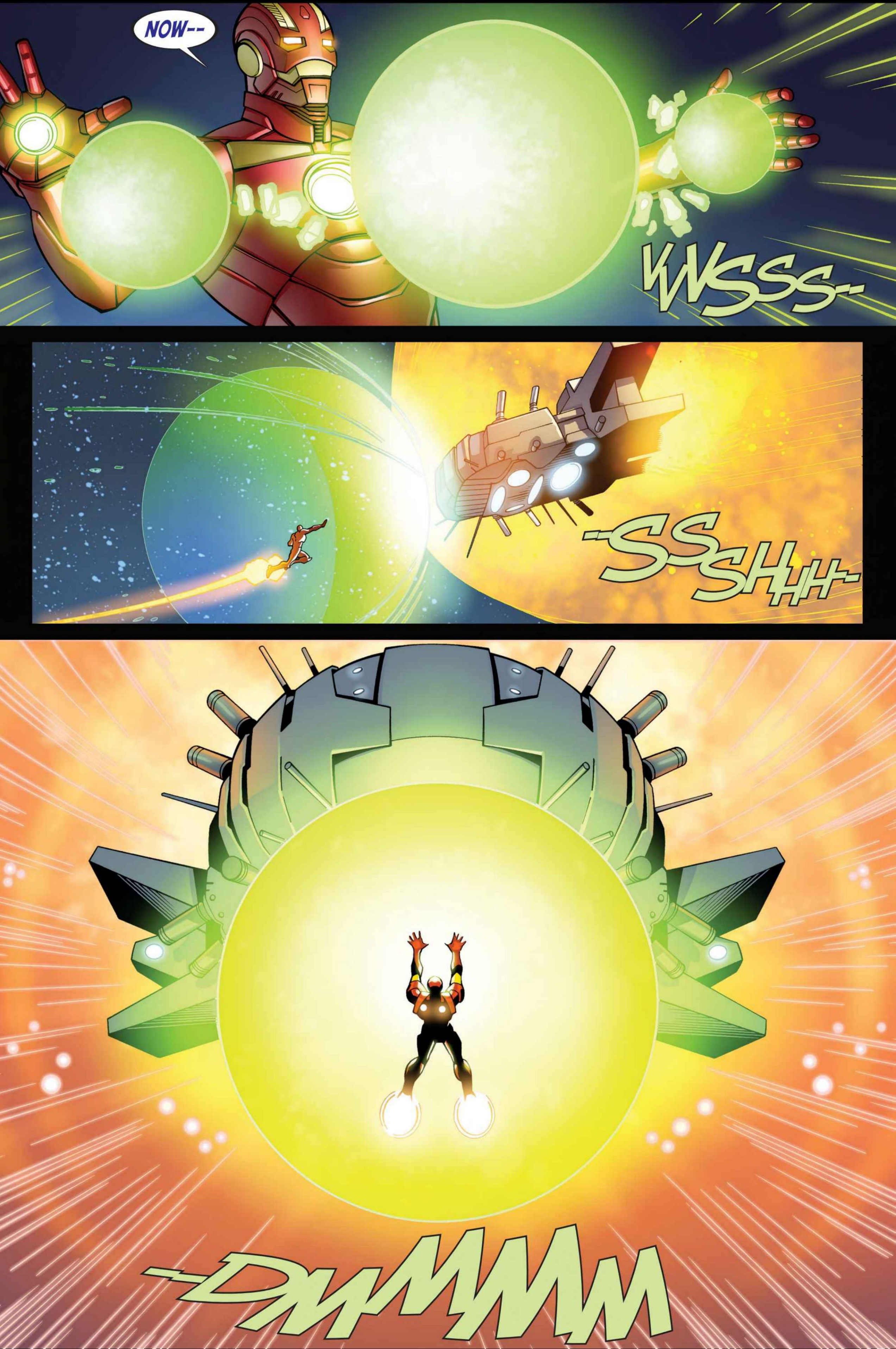

WIDE-ANGLE *REPULSOR BEAM*, P.E.P. START AT THREE TIMES NORMAL AND SCALE TO FIT.
NOTHING SHOULD BE ABLE TO REACH OUR *SOLAR SYSTEM* WITHOUT ME KNOWING ABOUT IT.
KVVVWWW
THE ONLY REASON Q.U.I.L.L. COULD GIVE ME SUCH LITTLE *WARNING...*
WWWMMM
...IS IF THE THREAT WAS FROM SOMEWHERE MUCH CLOSER TO HOME.
P.E.P.P.E.R.? TALK TO ME.
LIKE I SAID-- TWO BOGEYS, ONE STILL INCOMING.
FROM THE *MOON*.
FROM THE MOON.
THE BIG OL' MOON.
OKAY. PLOT ME AN INTERCEPT COURSE FOR THE SECOND ONE.
CLAC
KILLING THAT TIDAL WAVE TOOK A LOT OUT OF ME--
HOW MUCH REPULSOR BATTERY DO I HAVE LEFT?
POWER'S AT 70%
...OKAY. GREAT.
IS THAT GOING TO BE *ENOUGH?*

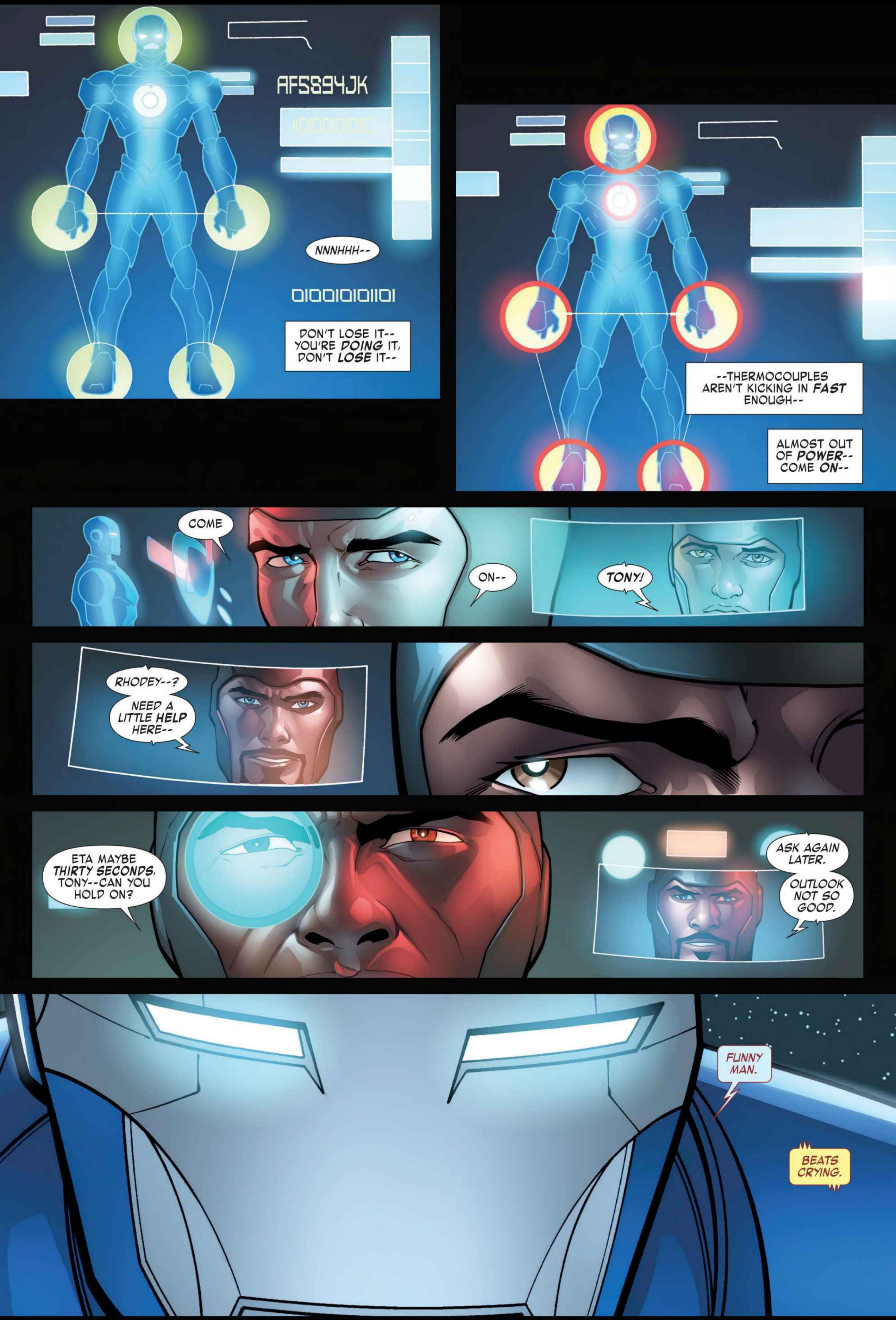

IT'LL HAVE TO BE.
SO TELL ME ABOUT BOGEY NUMBER TWO.
WELL, LOOKS LIKE NUMBER ONE WAS A TRACER SHOT-- SOMETHING TO HELP AIM. THAT'S WHY IT HIT THE WATER.
NUMBER TWO IS MUCH, MUCH BIGGER. AND THEY'VE CORRECTED THEIR TRAJECTORY.
IN TWO MINUTES, IT'S GOING TO HIT L.A. HARD ENOUGH TO TURN THE WEST COAST INTO A CRATER.
...
PLEASE TELL ME YOU TOLD SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT THIS.
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, TONY.

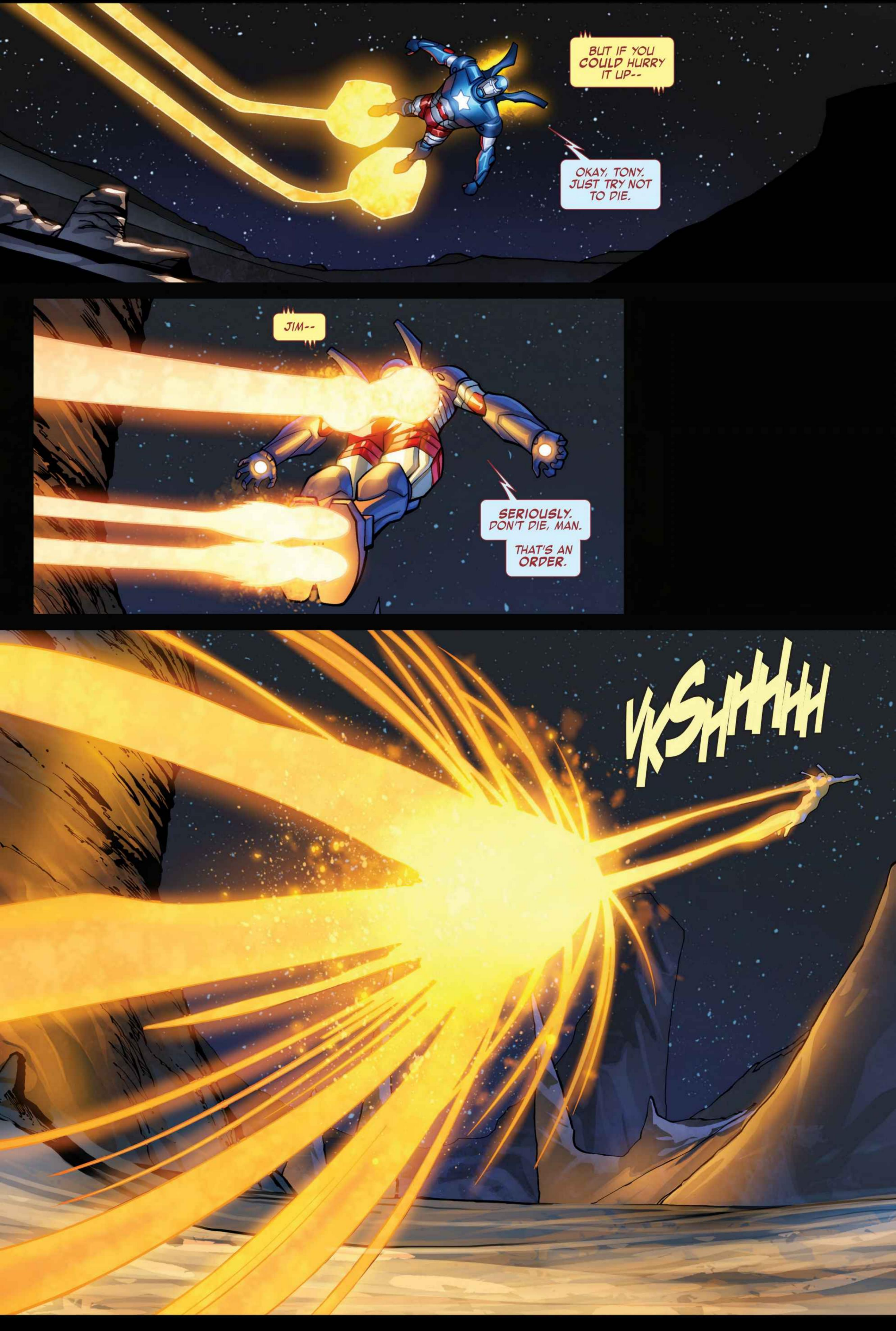

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE.
THIS IS RED TWO CALLING BASE, REPEAT RED TWO CALLING BASE--WE HAVE CONFIRMATION--
PATRIOT IS GO FOR LAUNCH, REPEAT, GO FOR LAUNCH-- OVER--
ROGER THAT.
WHENEVER YOU'RE READY, COLONEL RHODES.
YES, SIR.
CLAK
IRON PATRIOT IS GO FOR LAUNCH.
GOT YOUR BACK, TONY.
IGNITION IN 3--2--1--
AND WE HAVE IRON PATRIOT IN THE AIR.
BOOM
OVER.

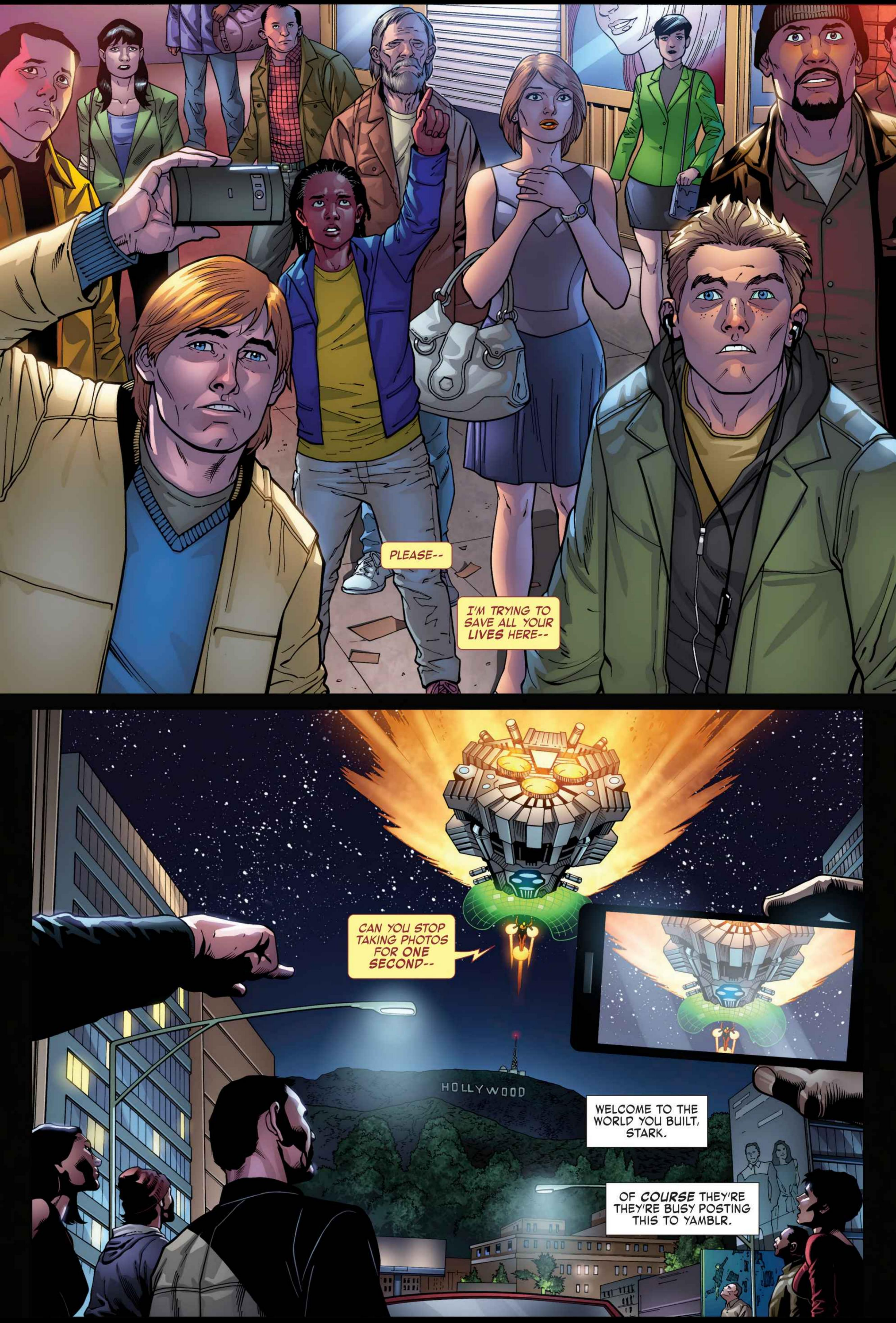

JIM RHODES IS IN THE AIR AND EN ROUTE, TONY.
IS HE GOING TO MAKE IT IN TIME?
ETA ONE MINUTE.
SO THAT'S A "NO."
TERRIFIC.
OKAY. GOT A VISUAL ON BOGEY TWO.
THAT'S...
THAT'S BIG...
TOO BIG.
FWOOSH

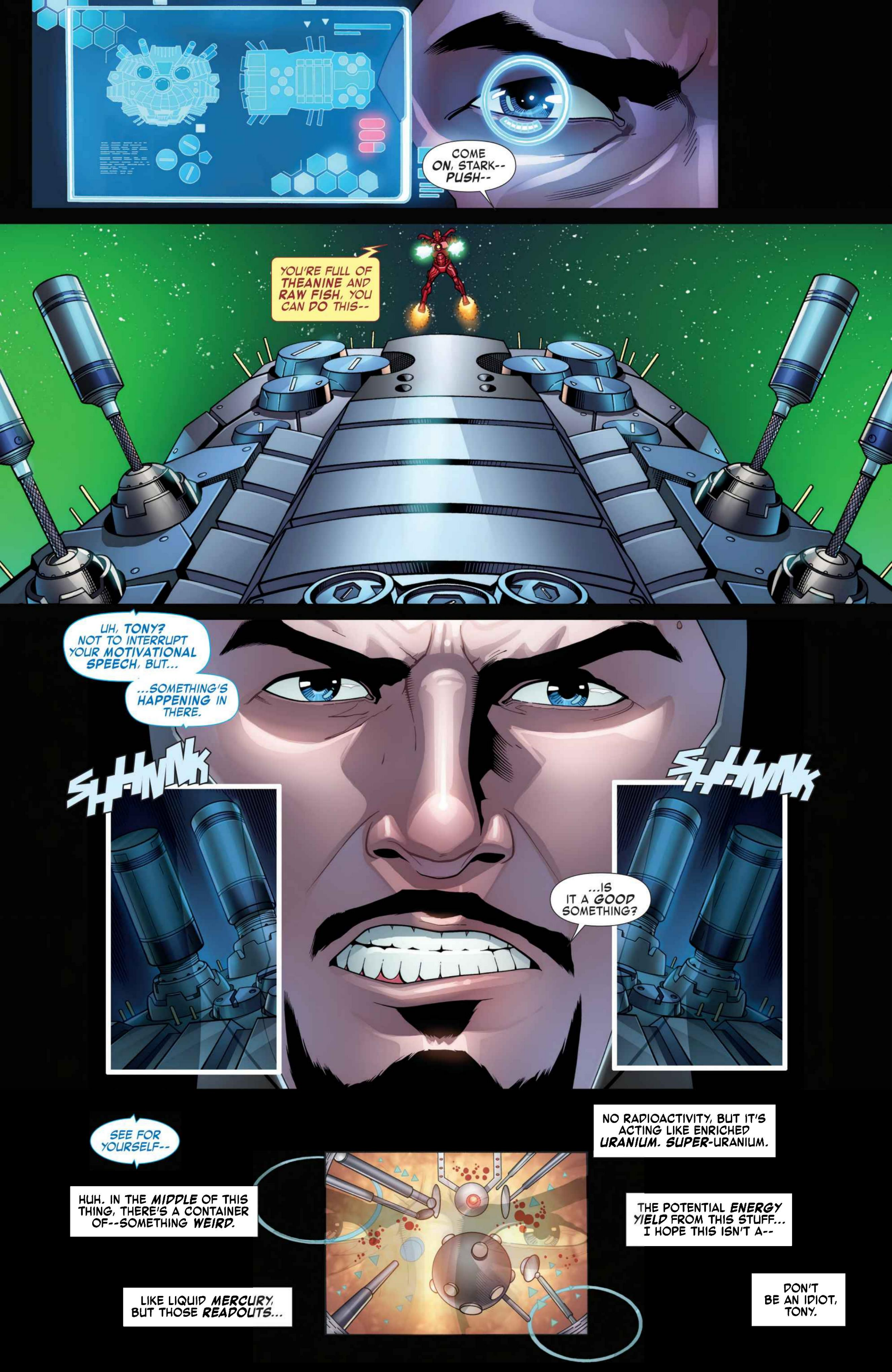

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO *STOP* IT.
SOMETHING THAT *MASSIVE*, WITH THAT MUCH *MOMENTUM*--IT'S JUST NOT PHYSICALLY *POSSIBLE*.
EVEN AT FULL POWER, I COULDN'T DO IT.
MAYBE TEN SECONDS TO IMPACT.
HOLLYWOOD
IS THAT OLD... SOVIET TECH...?
TONY!
FOCUS!
RIGHT.
FOCUS, STARK. YOU CAN DO THIS.
THE *SUIT* CAN DO THIS.
HAVE TO DO THIS ALL AT *ONCE*--
P.E.P.P.E.R.--OPEN UP THE **THERMOCOUPLES**--DRAIN THE HEAT FROM **REENTRY** INTO THE SUIT'S **INDUCTION SYSTEM**--
HEAT ENERGY TO **REPULSOR ENERGY.**
MORE THAN FULL POWER.
GET READY-- *READY*--

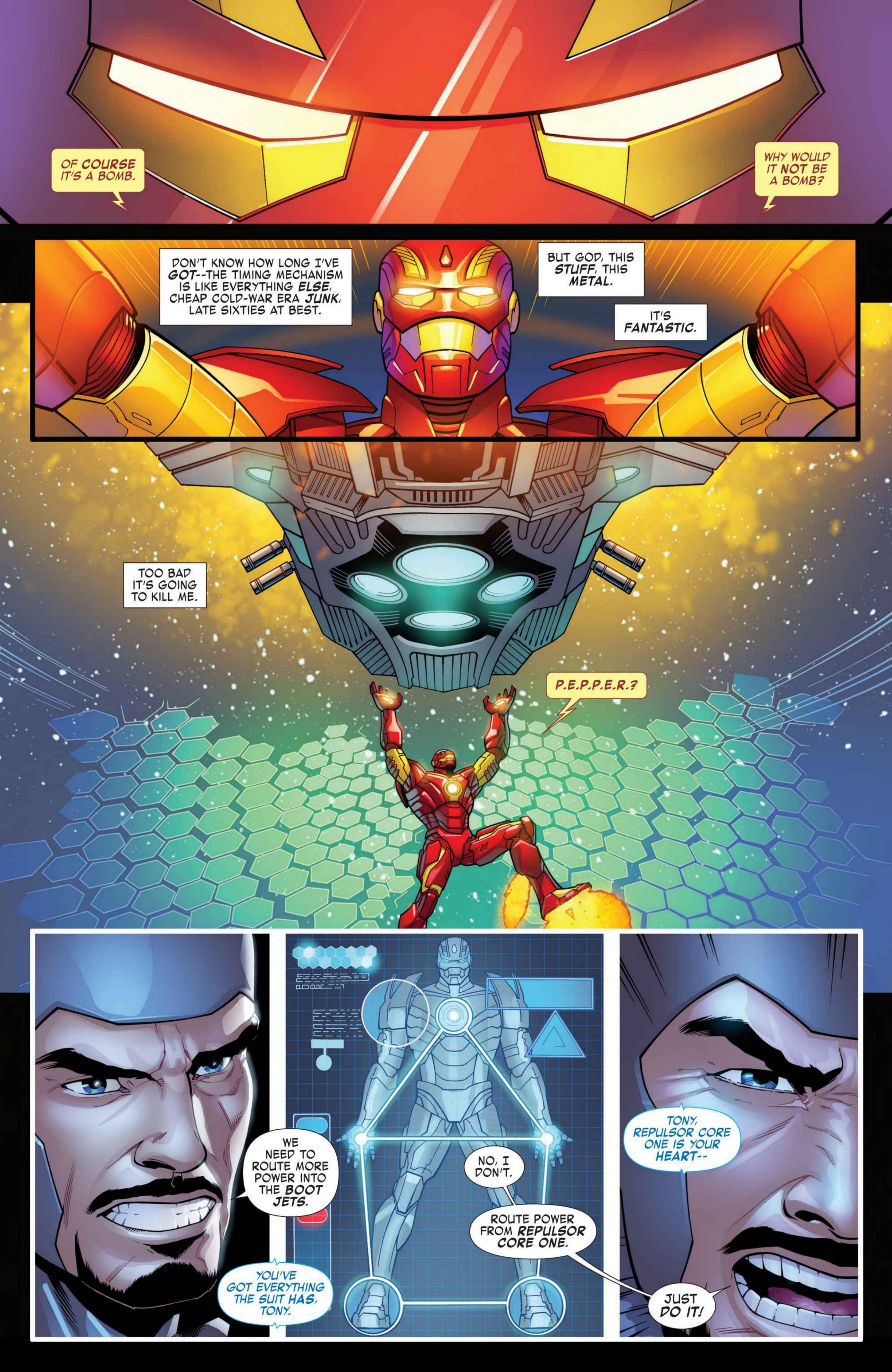

NOW--
KWSSS--
--SSSHHH--
--DUMMMM

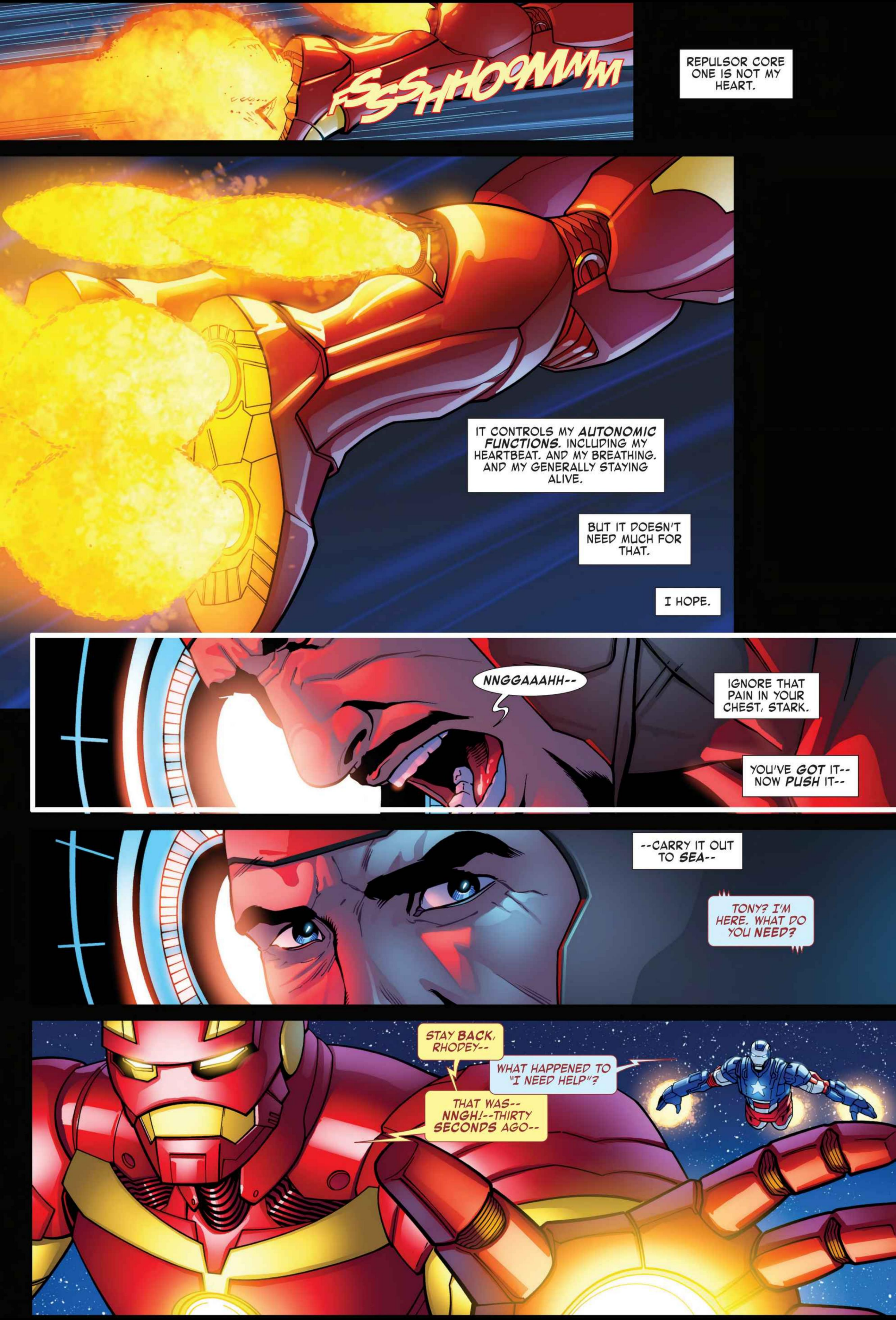

AF5894JK
110100001010
NNNHHH--
010010101101
DON'T LOSE IT-- YOU'RE *DOING* IT, DON'T *LOSE* IT--
--THERMOCOUPLES AREN'T KICKING IN *FAST* ENOUGH--
ALMOST OUT OF *POWER*-- COME *ON*--
COME
ON--
TONY!
RHODEY--?
NEED A LITTLE **HELP** HERE--
ETA MAYBE **THIRTY SECONDS**, TONY--CAN YOU HOLD ON?
ASK AGAIN LATER.
OUTLOOK NOT SO GOOD.
FUNNY MAN.
BEATS CRYING.

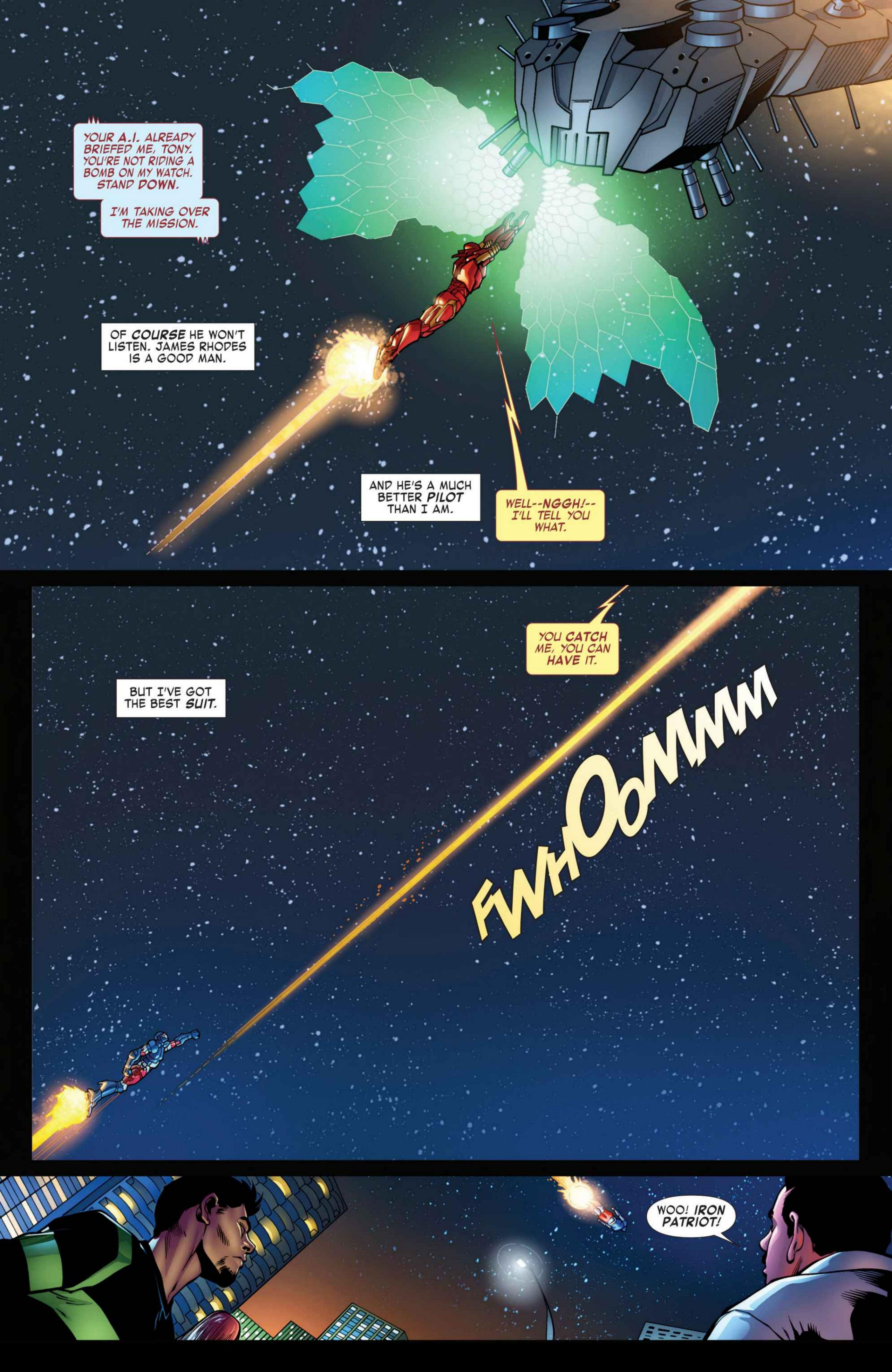

BUT IF YOU COULD HURRY IT UP--
OKAY, TONY. JUST TRY NOT TO DIE.
JIM--
SERIOUSLY. DON'T DIE, MAN.
THAT'S AN ORDER.
VKSHHHHH

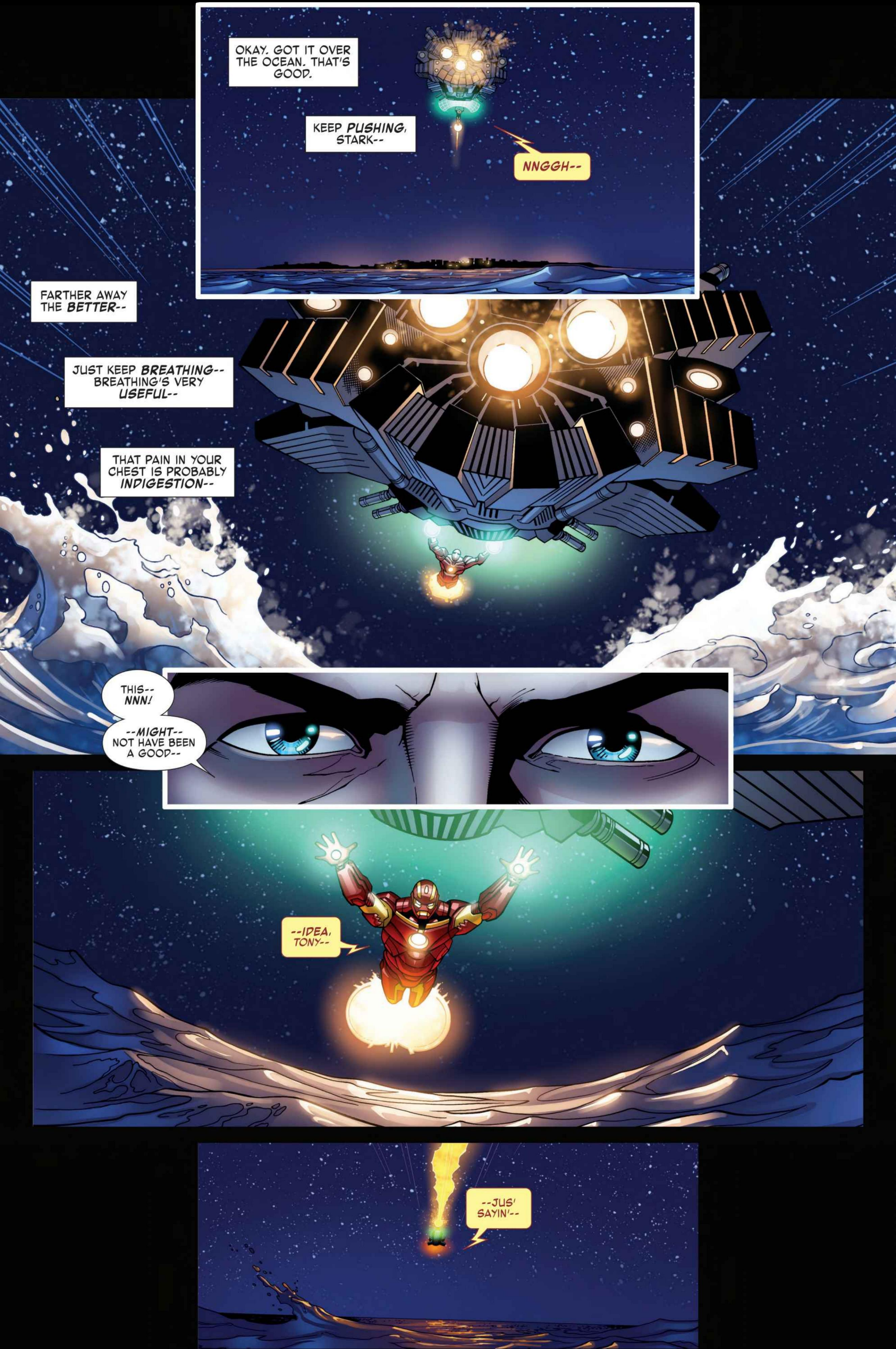

PLEASE--
I'M TRYING TO SAVE ALL YOUR LIVES HERE--
CAN YOU STOP TAKING PHOTOS FOR ONE SECOND--
HOLLYWOOD
WELCOME TO THE WORLD YOU BUILT, STARK.
OF COURSE THEY'RE THEY'RE BUSY POSTING THIS TO YAMBLR.

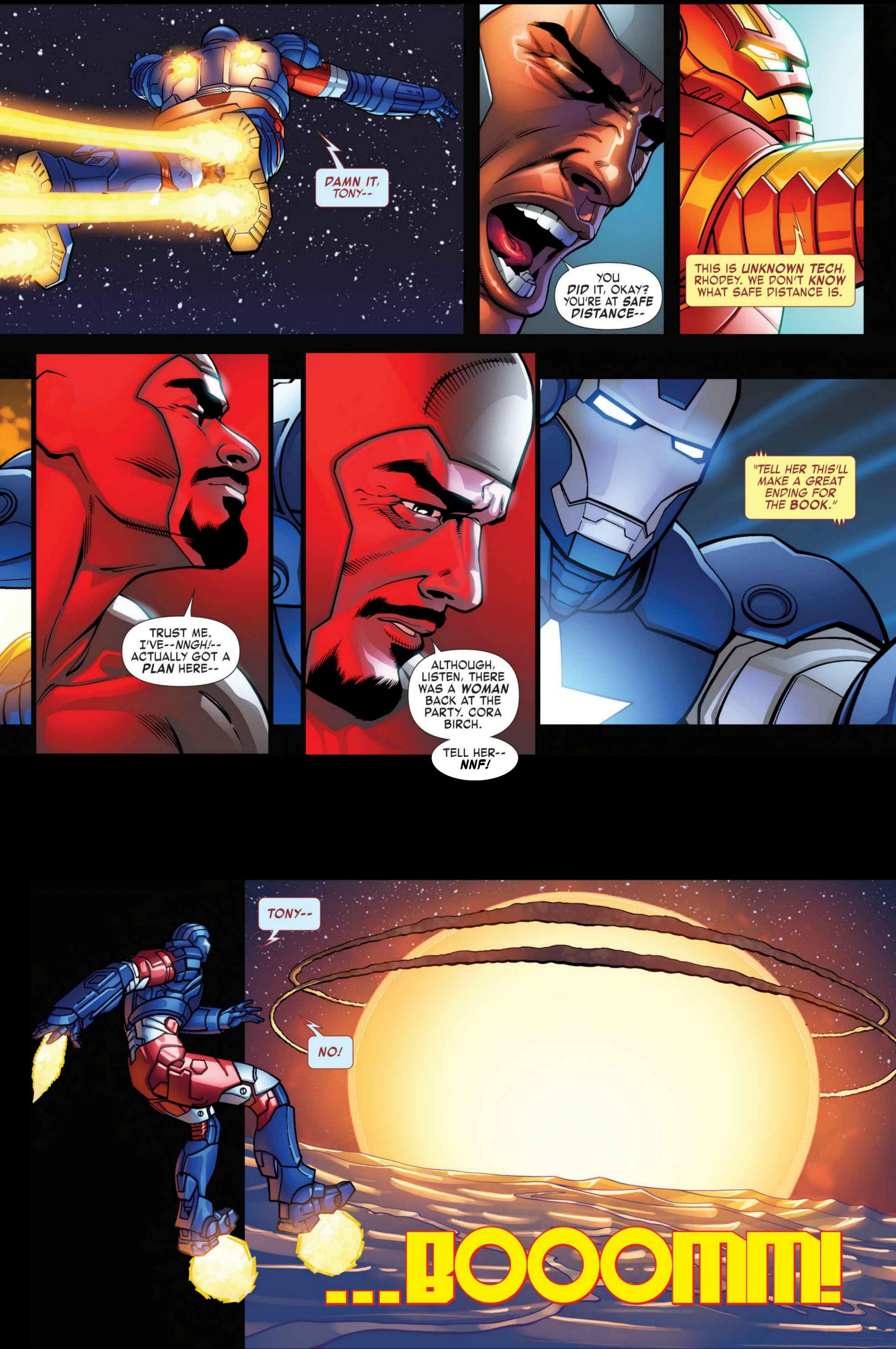

COME ON, STARK-- PUSH--
YOU'RE FULL OF THEANINE AND RAW FISH, YOU CAN DO THIS--
UH, TONY? NOT TO INTERRUPT YOUR MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH, BUT...
...SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN THERE.
SHHNK
SHHNK
...IS IT A GOOD SOMETHING?
SEE FOR YOURSELF--
HUH. IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS THING, THERE'S A CONTAINER OF--SOMETHING WEIRD.
LIKE LIQUID MERCURY, BUT THOSE READOUTS...
NO RADIOACTIVITY, BUT IT'S ACTING LIKE ENRICHED URANIUM. SUPER-URANIUM.
THE POTENTIAL ENERGY YIELD FROM THIS STUFF... I HOPE THIS ISN'T A--
DON'T BE AN IDIOT, TONY.

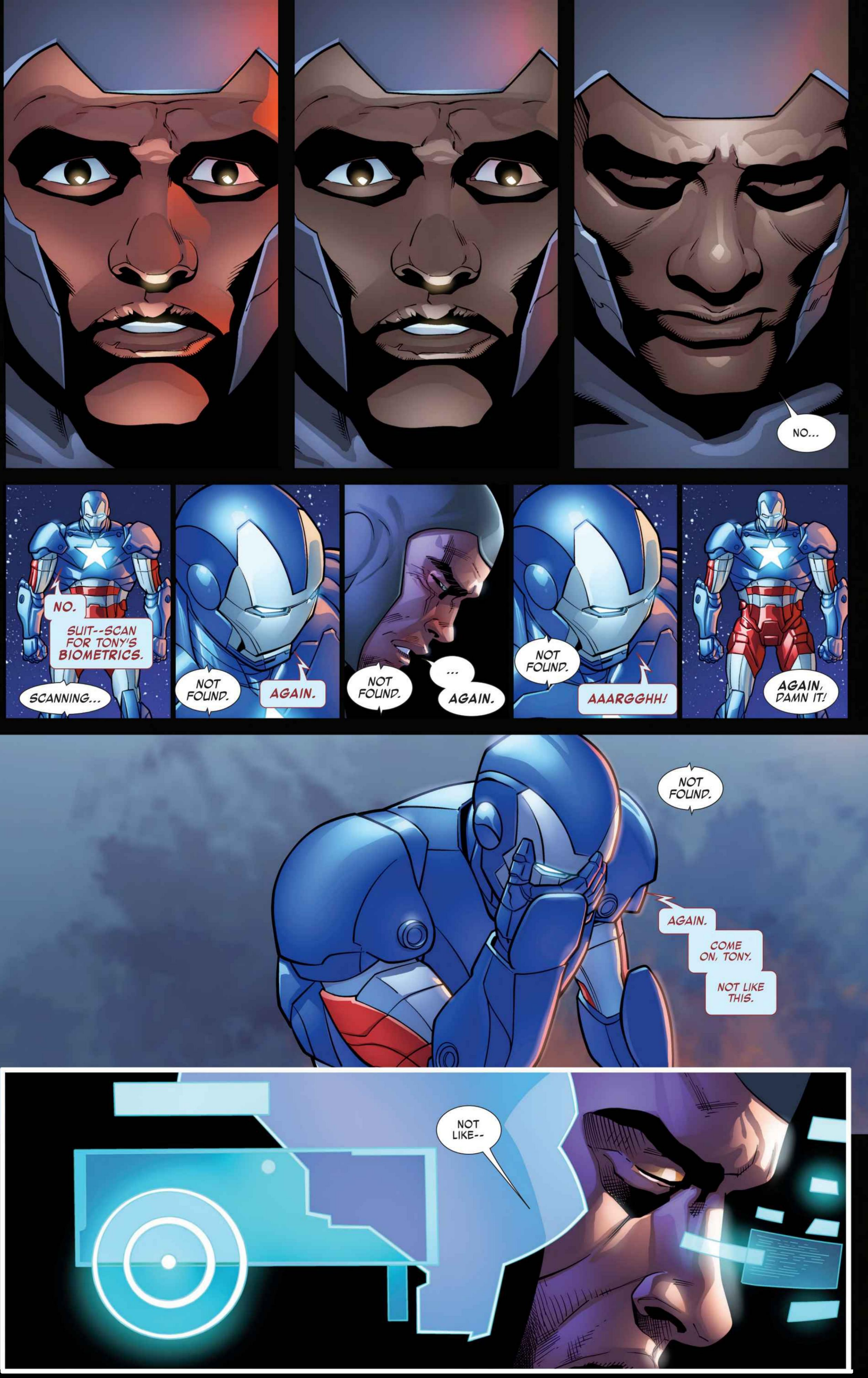

OF COURSE IT'S A BOMB.
WHY WOULD IT NOT BE A BOMB?
DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'VE GOT--THE TIMING MECHANISM IS LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, CHEAP COLD-WAR ERA JUNK, LATE SIXTIES AT BEST.
BUT GOD, THIS STUFF, THIS METAL.
IT'S FANTASTIC.
TOO BAD IT'S GOING TO KILL ME.
P.E.P.P.E.R.?
WE NEED TO ROUTE MORE POWER INTO THE BOOT JETS.
YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING THE SUIT HAS, TONY.
NO, I DON'T.
ROUTE POWER FROM REPULSOR CORE ONE.
TONY, REPULSOR CORE ONE IS YOUR HEART--
JUST DO IT!

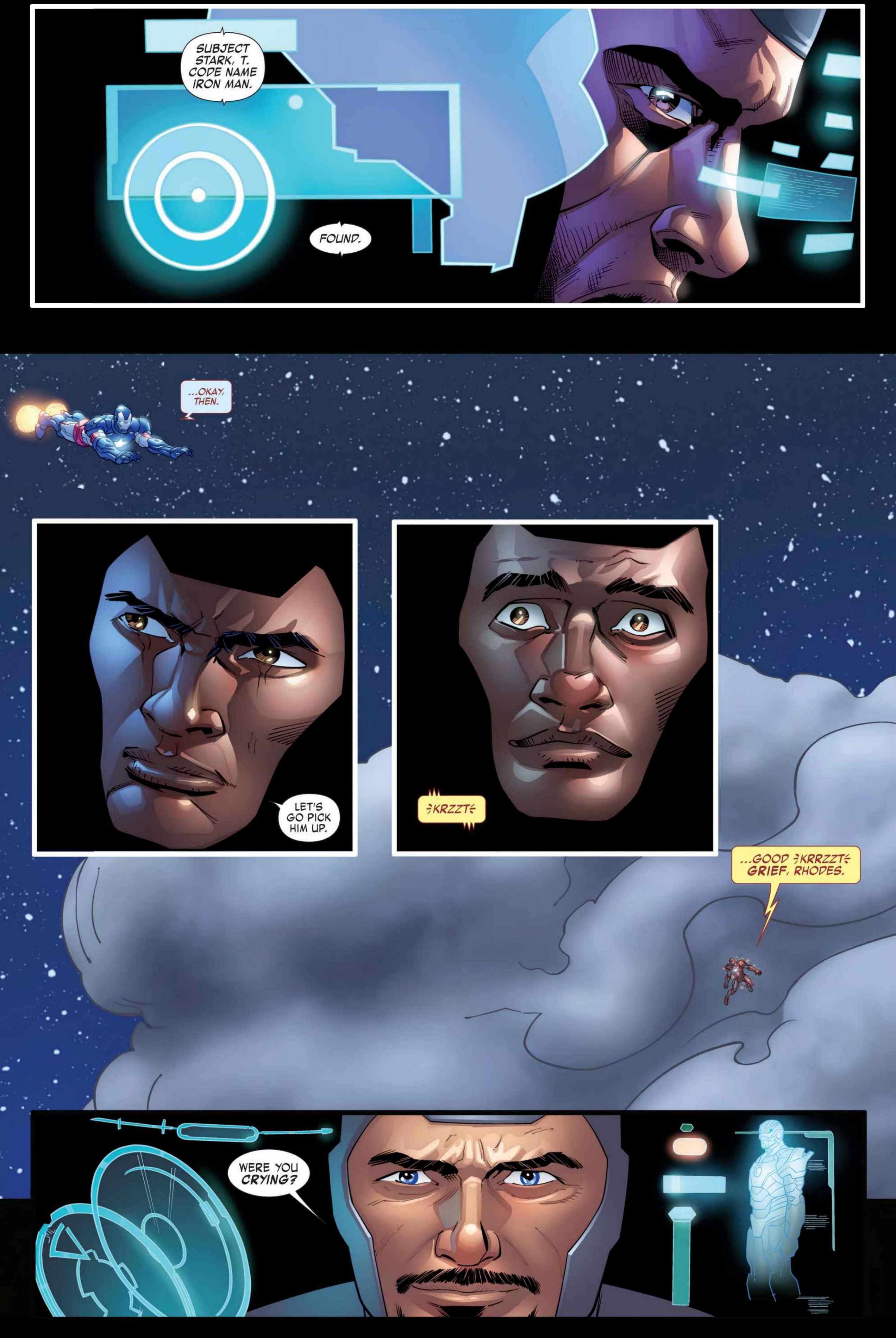

FSSSHOOMMM
REPULSOR CORE ONE IS NOT MY HEART.
IT CONTROLS MY *AUTONOMIC FUNCTIONS.* INCLUDING MY HEARTBEAT. AND MY BREATHING. AND MY GENERALLY STAYING ALIVE.
BUT IT DOESN'T NEED MUCH FOR THAT.
I HOPE.
NNGGAAAHH--
IGNORE THAT PAIN IN YOUR CHEST, STARK.
YOU'VE *GOT* IT-- NOW *PUSH* IT--
--CARRY IT OUT TO *SEA*--
TONY? I'M HERE. WHAT DO YOU NEED?
STAY BACK, RHODEY--
WHAT HAPPENED TO "I NEED HELP"?
THAT WAS-- NNGH!--THIRTY SECONDS AGO--

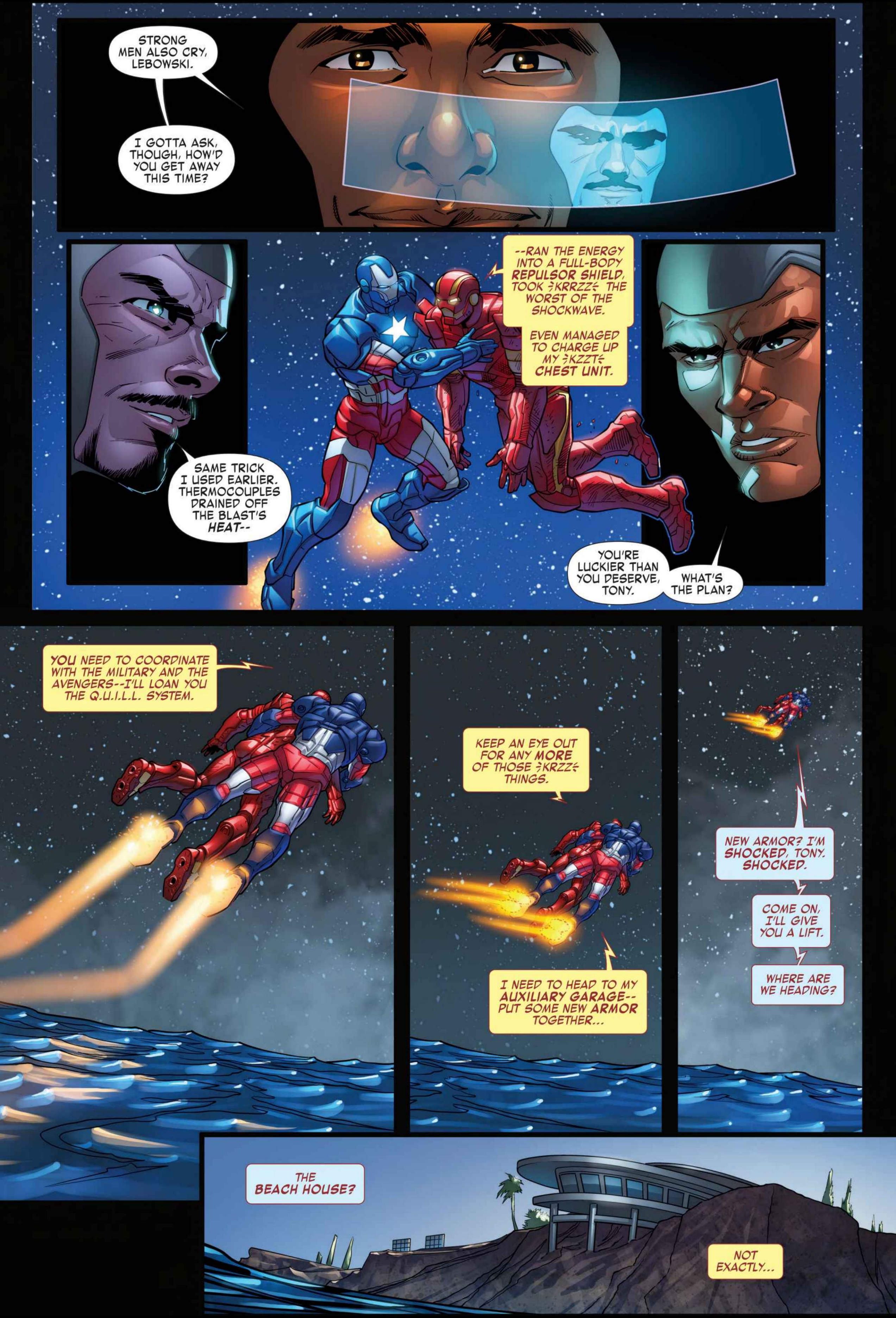

YOUR A.I. ALREADY BRIEFED ME, TONY. YOU'RE NOT RIDING A BOMB ON MY WATCH. STAND DOWN.
I'M TAKING OVER THE MISSION.
OF COURSE HE WON'T LISTEN. JAMES RHODES IS A GOOD MAN.
AND HE'S A MUCH BETTER PILOT THAN I AM.
WELL--NGGH!-- I'LL TELL YOU WHAT.
YOU CATCH ME, YOU CAN HAVE IT.
BUT I'VE GOT THE BEST SUIT.
FWHOOMMM
WOO! IRON PATRIOT!

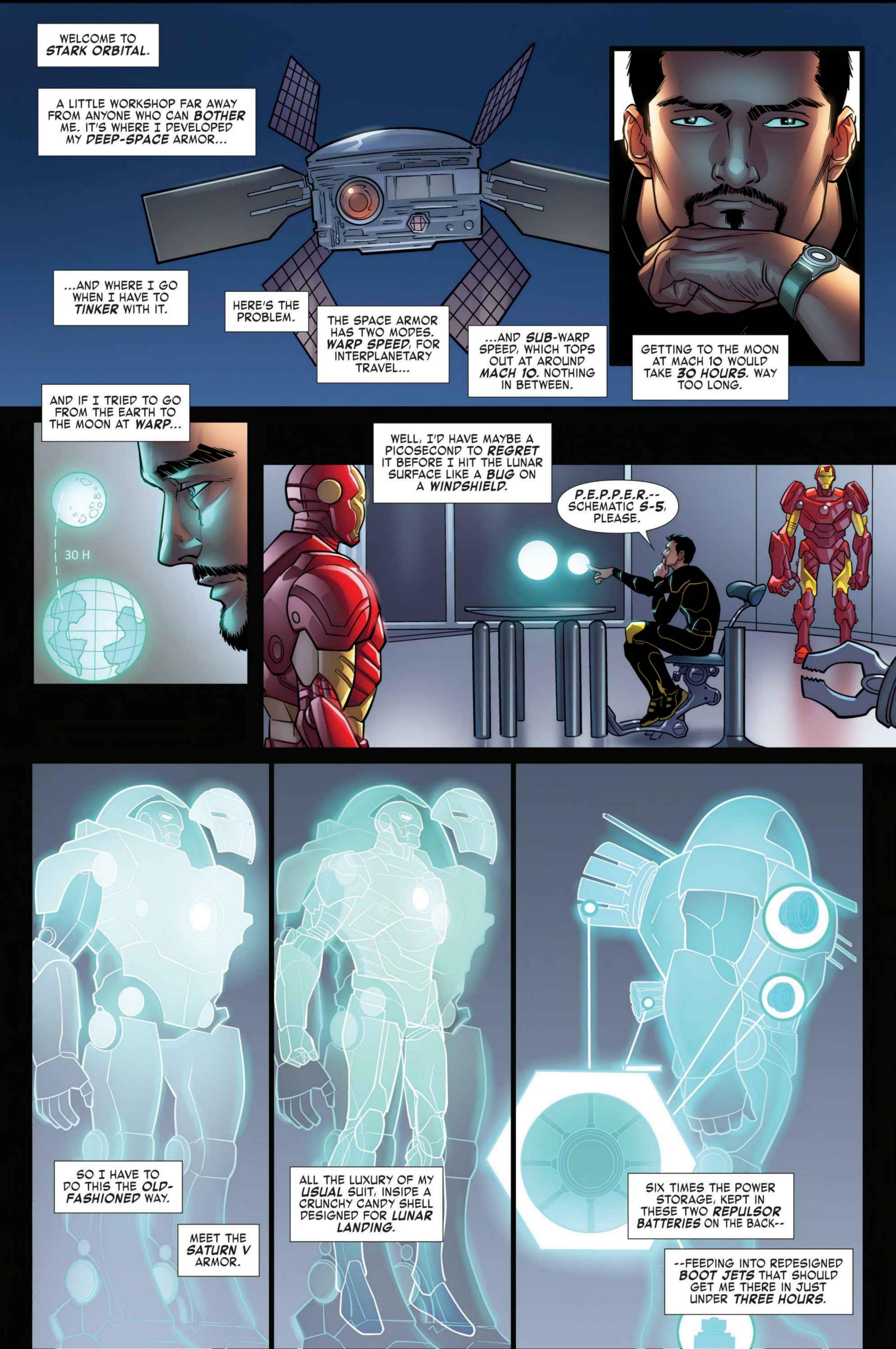

OKAY. GOT IT OVER THE OCEAN. THAT'S GOOD.
KEEP *PUSHING,* STARK--
NNGGH--
FARTHER AWAY THE *BETTER*--
JUST KEEP *BREATHING*-- BREATHING'S VERY *USEFUL*--
THAT PAIN IN YOUR CHEST IS PROBABLY *INDIGESTION*--
THIS-- *NNN!*
--*MIGHT*-- NOT HAVE BEEN A GOOD--
--IDEA, TONY--
--JUS' SAYIN'--

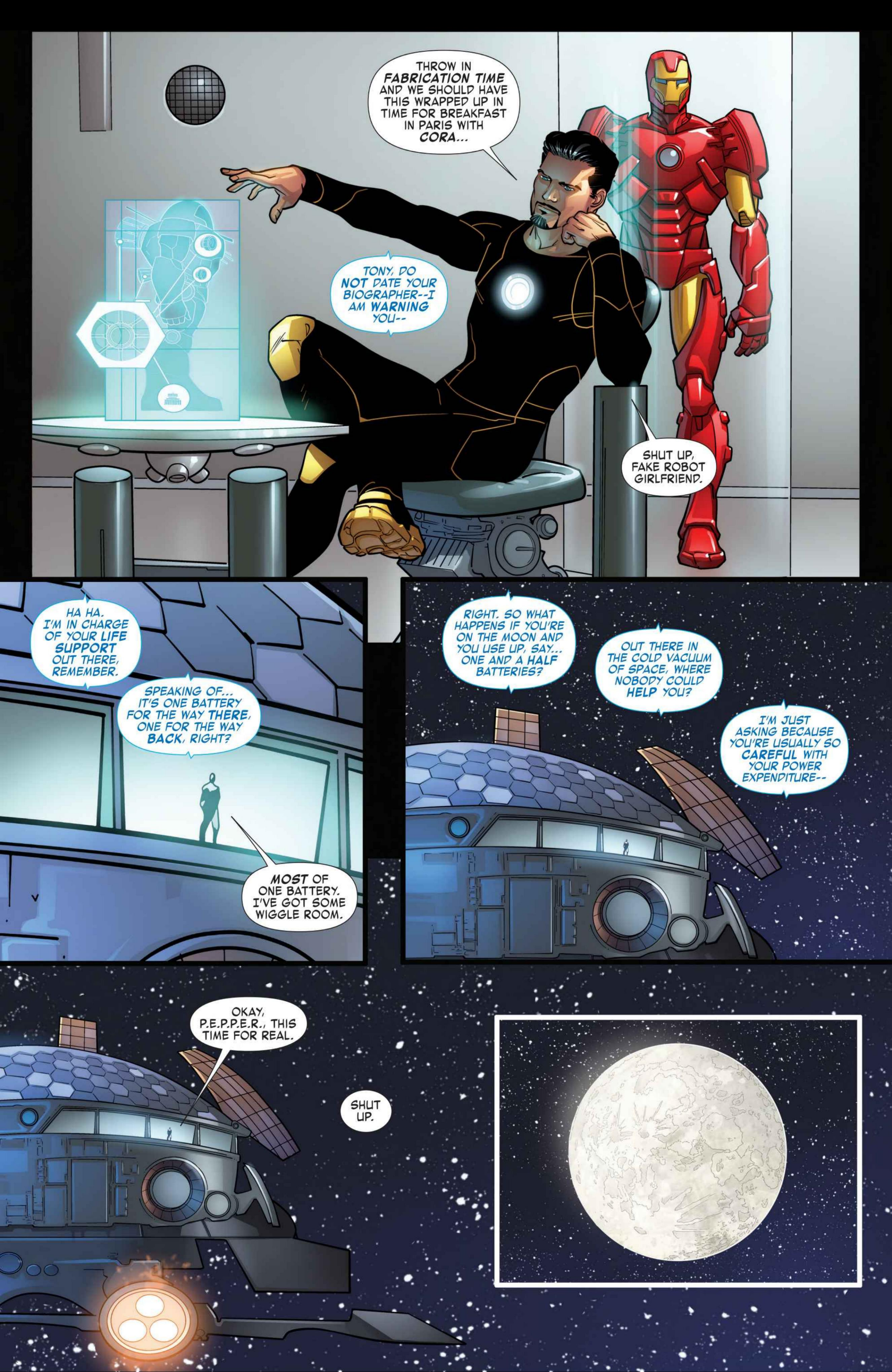

DAMN IT, TONY--
YOU DID IT, OKAY? YOU'RE AT SAFE DISTANCE--
THIS IS UNKNOWN TECH, RHODEY. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT SAFE DISTANCE IS.
TRUST ME. I'VE--NNGH!--ACTUALLY GOT A PLAN HERE--
ALTHOUGH, LISTEN, THERE WAS A WOMAN BACK AT THE PARTY. CORA BIRCH.
TELL HER--NNF!
"TELL HER THIS'LL MAKE A GREAT ENDING FOR THE BOOK."
TONY--
NO!
...BOOOMM!

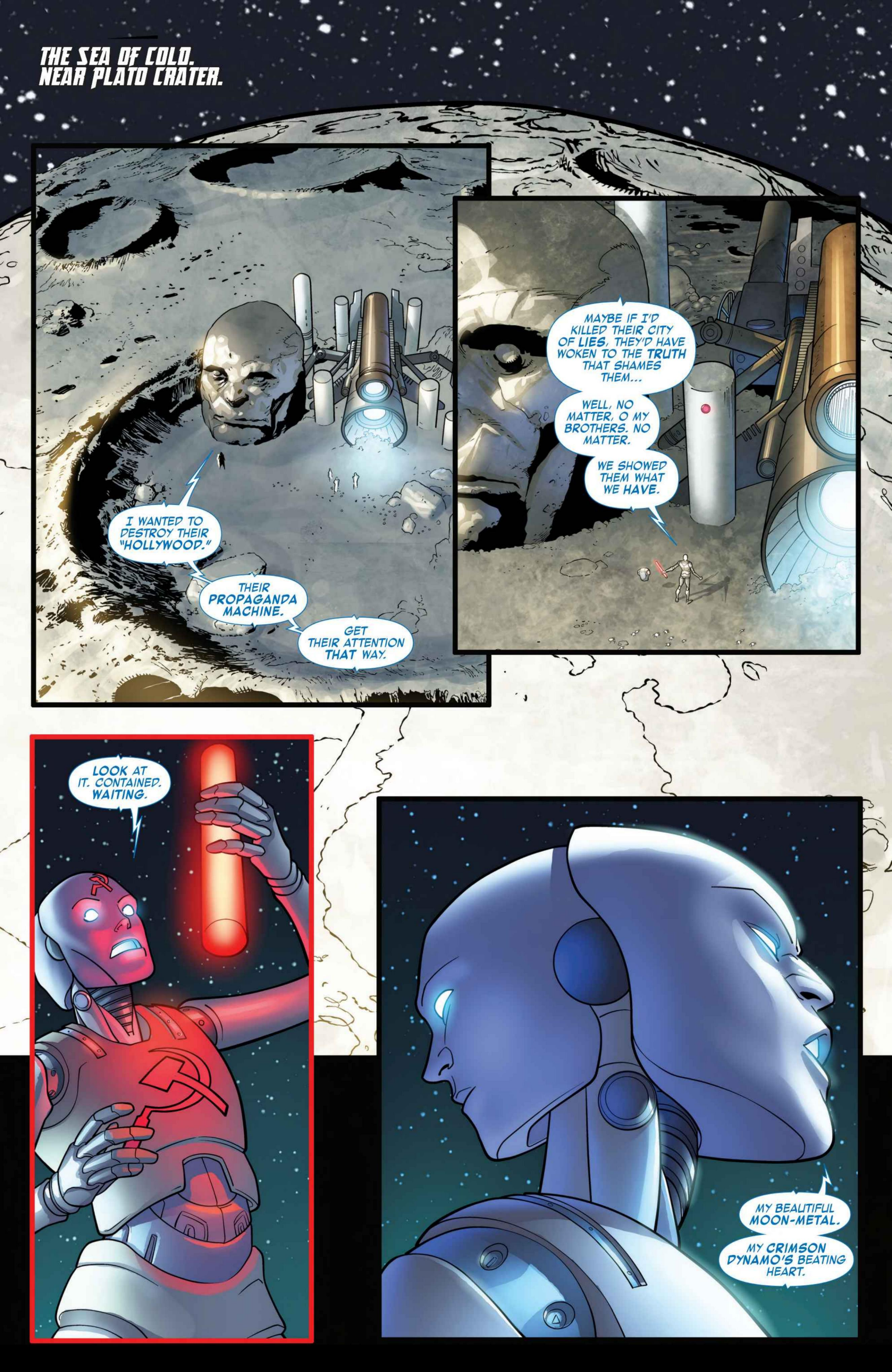

NO...
NO.
SUIT--SCAN FOR TONY'S BIOMETRICS.
SCANNING...
NOT FOUND.
AGAIN.
NOT FOUND.
...
AGAIN.
NOT FOUND.
AAARGGHH!
AGAIN, DAMN IT!
NOT FOUND.
AGAIN.
COME ON, TONY.
NOT LIKE THIS.
NOT LIKE--

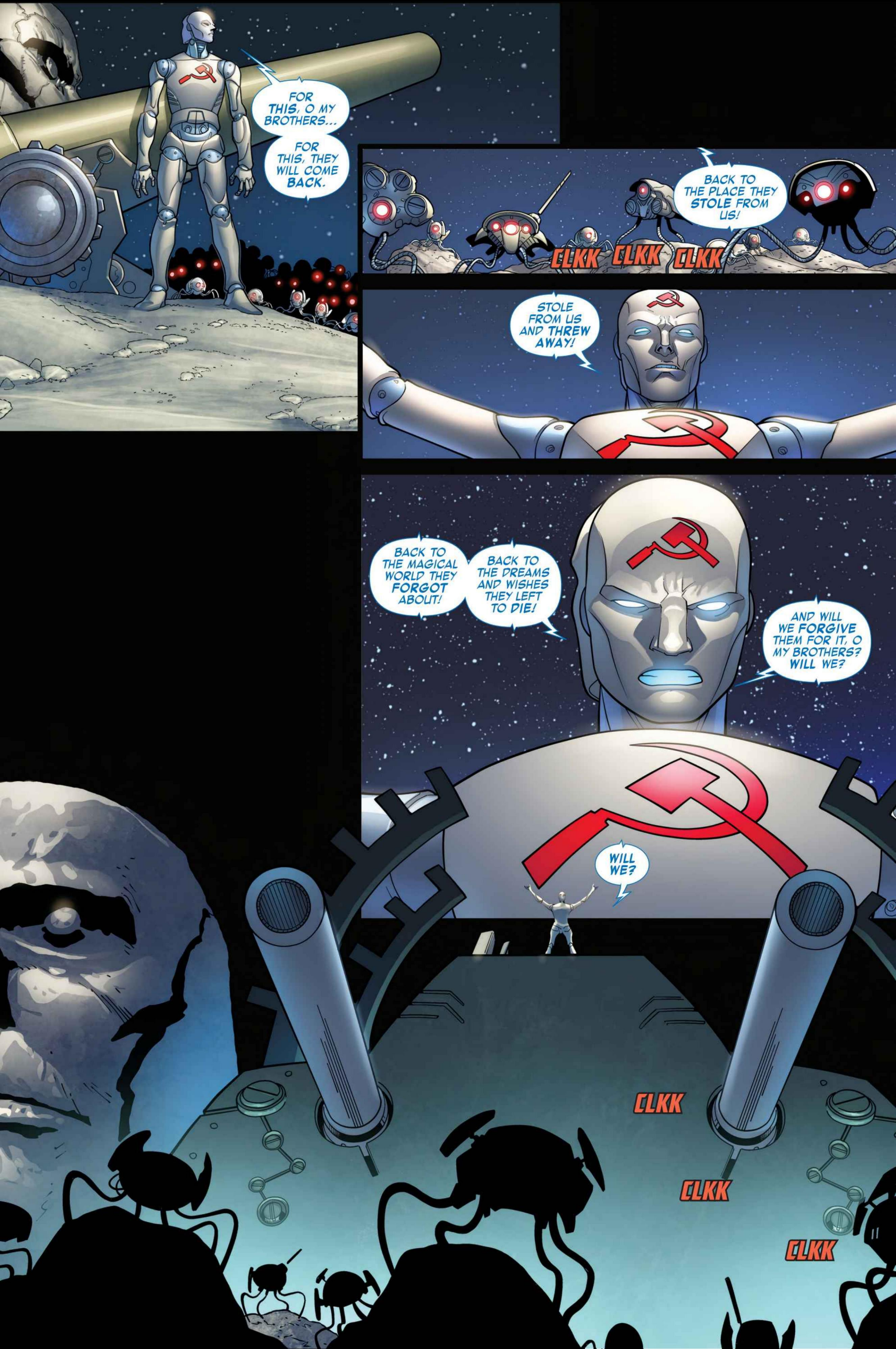

SUBJECT STARK, T. CODE NAME IRON MAN.
FOUND.
...OKAY, THEN.
LET'S GO PICK HIM UP.
⚡KRZZT⚡
...GOOD ⚡KRRZZT⚡ GRIEF, RHODES.
WERE YOU CRYING?

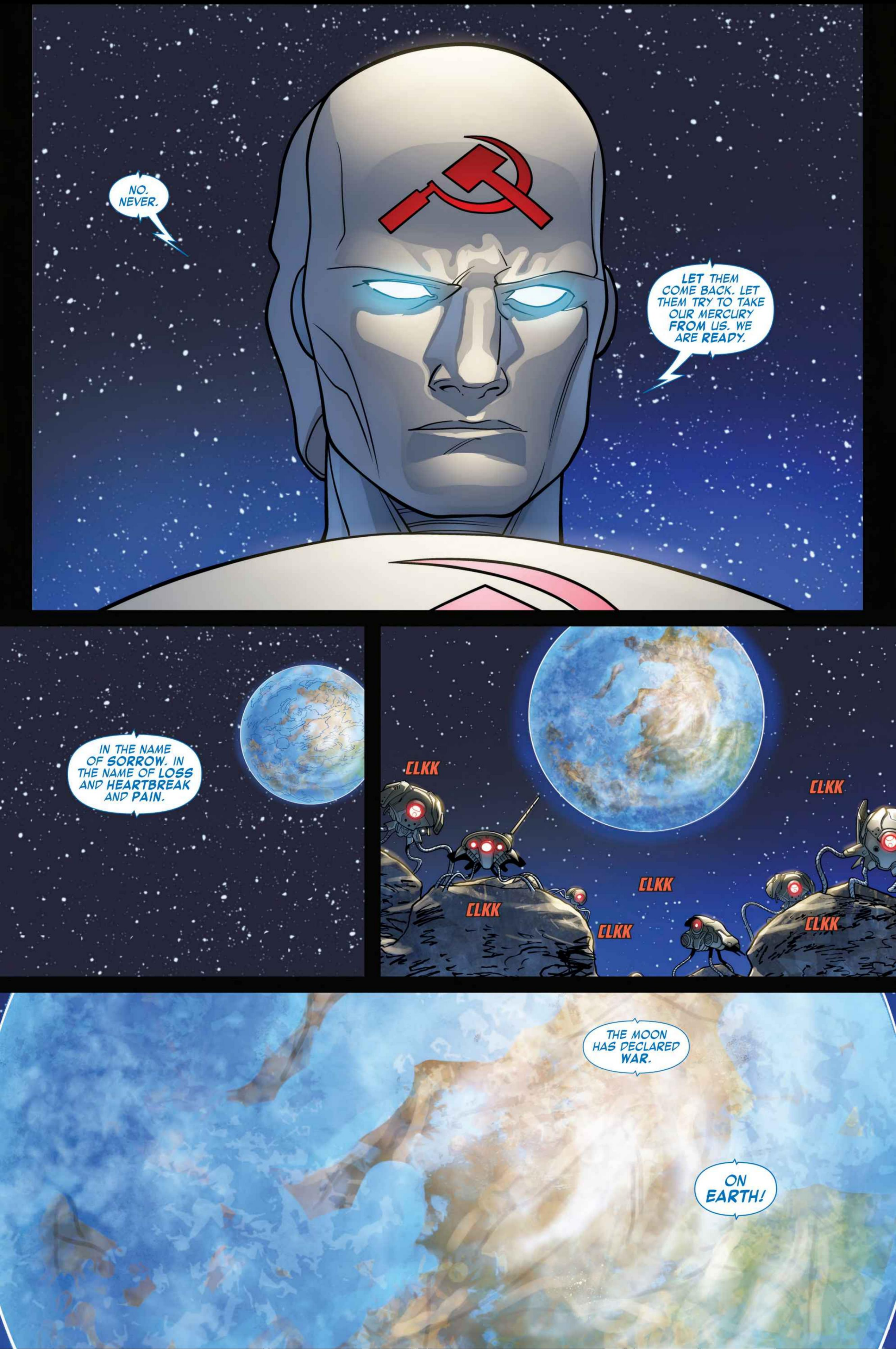

STRONG MEN ALSO CRY, LEBOWSKI.
I GOTTA ASK, THOUGH, HOW'D YOU GET AWAY THIS TIME?
SAME TRICK I USED EARLIER. THERMOCOUPLES DRAINED OFF THE BLAST'S *HEAT*--
--RAN THE ENERGY INTO A FULL-BODY **REPULSOR SHIELD**. TOOK ≈KRZZ≈ THE WORST OF THE SHOCKWAVE.
EVEN MANAGED TO CHARGE UP MY ≈KZZT≈ **CHEST UNIT**.
YOU'RE LUCKIER THAN YOU DESERVE, TONY.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?
YOU NEED TO COORDINATE WITH THE MILITARY AND THE AVENGERS--I'LL LOAN YOU THE Q.U.I.L.L. SYSTEM.
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANY **MORE** OF THOSE ≈KRZZ≈ THINGS.
I NEED TO HEAD TO MY **AUXILIARY GARAGE**-- PUT SOME NEW **ARMOR** TOGETHER...
NEW ARMOR? I'M **SHOCKED**, TONY. **SHOCKED**.
COME ON, I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT.
WHERE ARE WE HEADING?
THE **BEACH HOUSE?**
NOT EXACTLY...

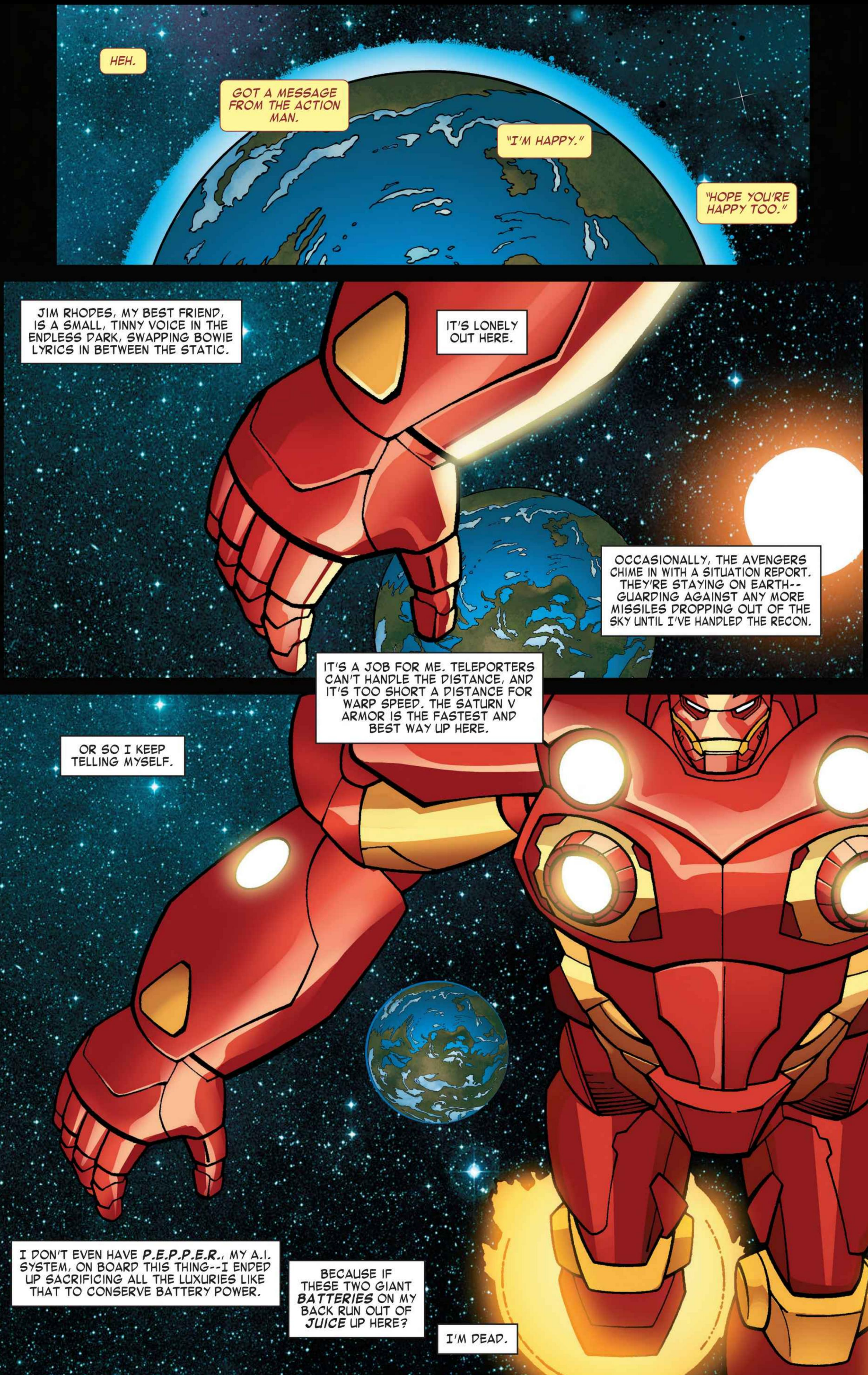

WELCOME TO STARK ORBITAL.
A LITTLE WORKSHOP FAR AWAY FROM ANYONE WHO CAN BOTHER ME. IT'S WHERE I DEVELOPED MY DEEP-SPACE ARMOR...
...AND WHERE I GO WHEN I HAVE TO TINKER WITH IT.
HERE'S THE PROBLEM.
THE SPACE ARMOR HAS TWO MODES. WARP SPEED, FOR INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL...
...AND SUB-WARP SPEED, WHICH TOPS OUT AT AROUND MACH 10. NOTHING IN BETWEEN.
GETTING TO THE MOON AT MACH 10 WOULD TAKE 30 HOURS. WAY TOO LONG.
AND IF I TRIED TO GO FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON AT WARP...
30 H
WELL, I'D HAVE MAYBE A PICOSECOND TO REGRET IT BEFORE I HIT THE LUNAR SURFACE LIKE A BUG ON A WINDSHIELD.
P.E.P.P.E.R.-- SCHEMATIC S-5, PLEASE.
SO I HAVE TO DO THIS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.
MEET THE SATURN V ARMOR.
ALL THE LUXURY OF MY USUAL SUIT, INSIDE A CRUNCHY CANDY SHELL DESIGNED FOR LUNAR LANDING.
SIX TIMES THE POWER STORAGE, KEPT IN THESE TWO REPULSOR BATTERIES ON THE BACK--
--FEEDING INTO REDESIGNED BOOT JETS THAT SHOULD GET ME THERE IN JUST UNDER THREE HOURS.

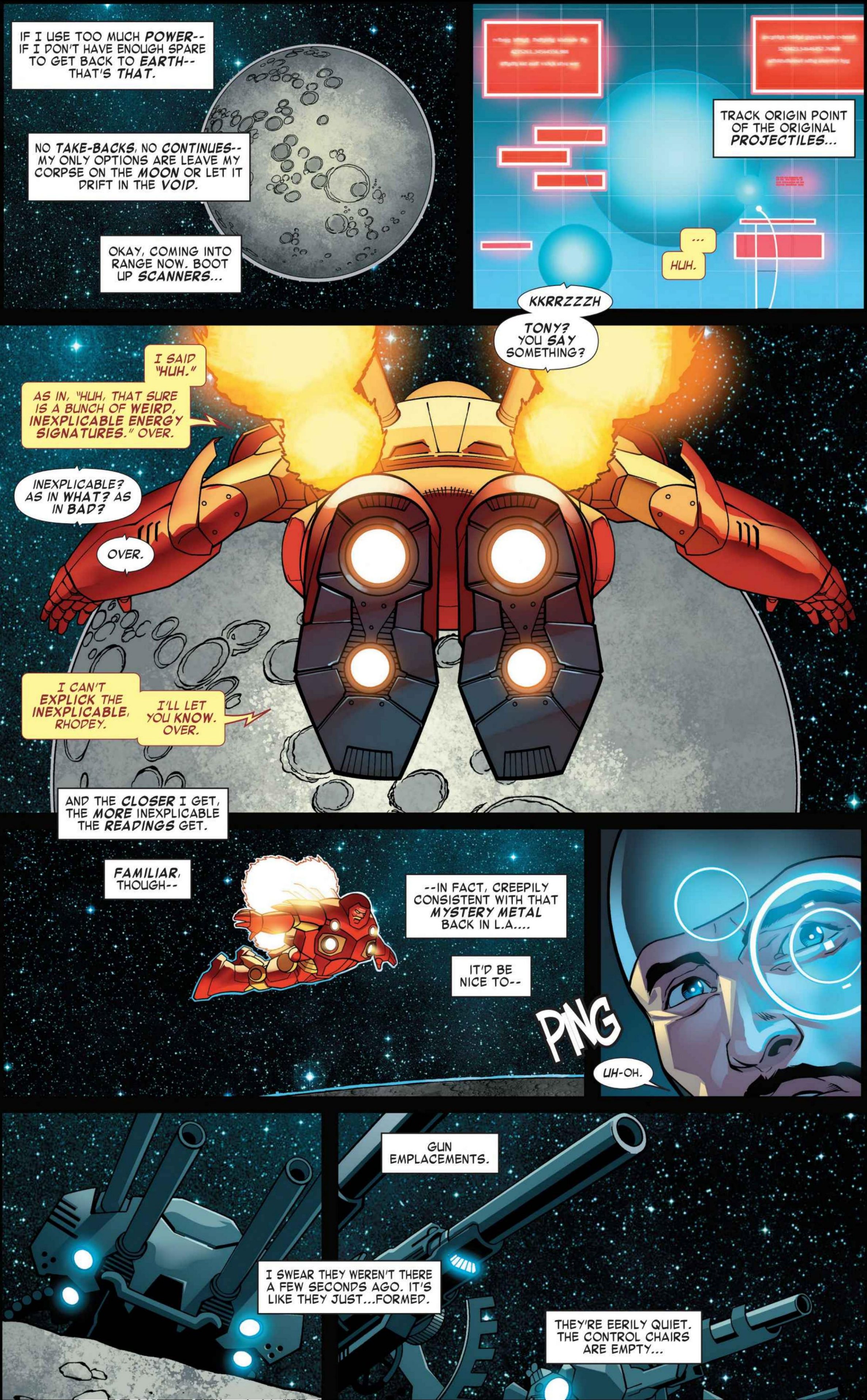

THROW IN FABRICATION TIME AND WE SHOULD HAVE THIS WRAPPED UP IN TIME FOR BREAKFAST IN PARIS WITH CORA...
TONY, DO NOT DATE YOUR BIOGRAPHER--I AM WARNING YOU--
SHUT UP, FAKE ROBOT GIRLFRIEND.
HA HA. I'M IN CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE SUPPORT OUT THERE, REMEMBER.
SPEAKING OF... IT'S ONE BATTERY FOR THE WAY THERE, ONE FOR THE WAY BACK, RIGHT?
MOST OF ONE BATTERY. I'VE GOT SOME WIGGLE ROOM.
RIGHT. SO WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU'RE ON THE MOON AND YOU USE UP, SAY... ONE AND A HALF BATTERIES?
OUT THERE IN THE COLD VACUUM OF SPACE, WHERE NOBODY COULD HELP YOU?
I'M JUST ASKING BECAUSE YOU'RE USUALLY SO CAREFUL WITH YOUR POWER EXPENDITURE--
OKAY, P.E.P.P.E.R., THIS TIME FOR REAL.
SHUT UP.

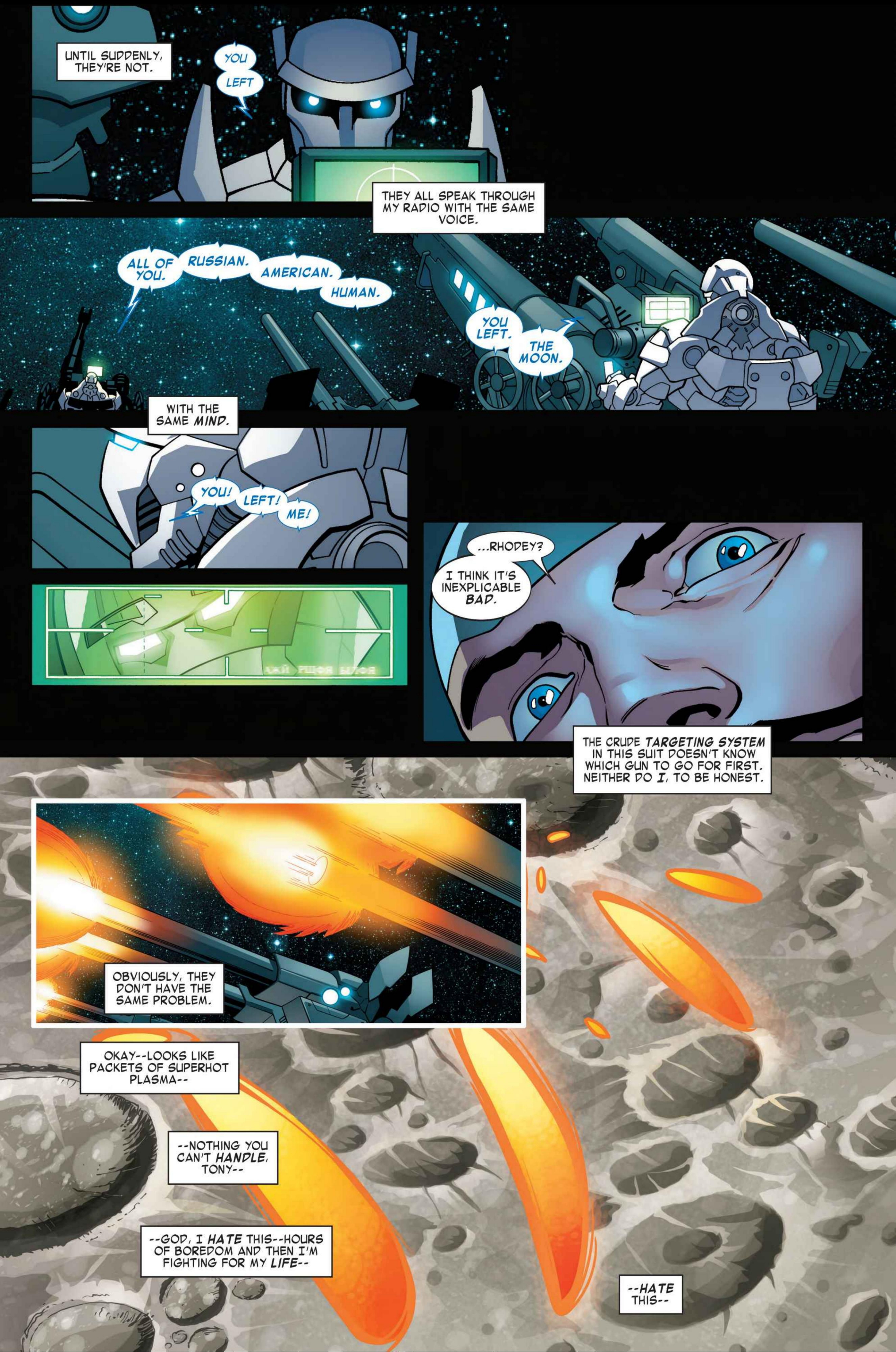

THE SEA OF COLD. NEAR PLATO CRATER.
I WANTED TO DESTROY THEIR "HOLLYWOOD."
THEIR PROPAGANDA MACHINE.
GET THEIR ATTENTION THAT WAY.
MAYBE IF I'D KILLED THEIR CITY OF LIES, THEY'D HAVE WOKEN TO THE TRUTH THAT SHAMES THEM...
WELL, NO MATTER, O MY BROTHERS. NO MATTER.
WE SHOWED THEM WHAT WE HAVE.
LOOK AT IT. CONTAINED. WAITING.
MY BEAUTIFUL MOON-METAL.
MY CRIMSON DYNAMO'S BEATING HEART.

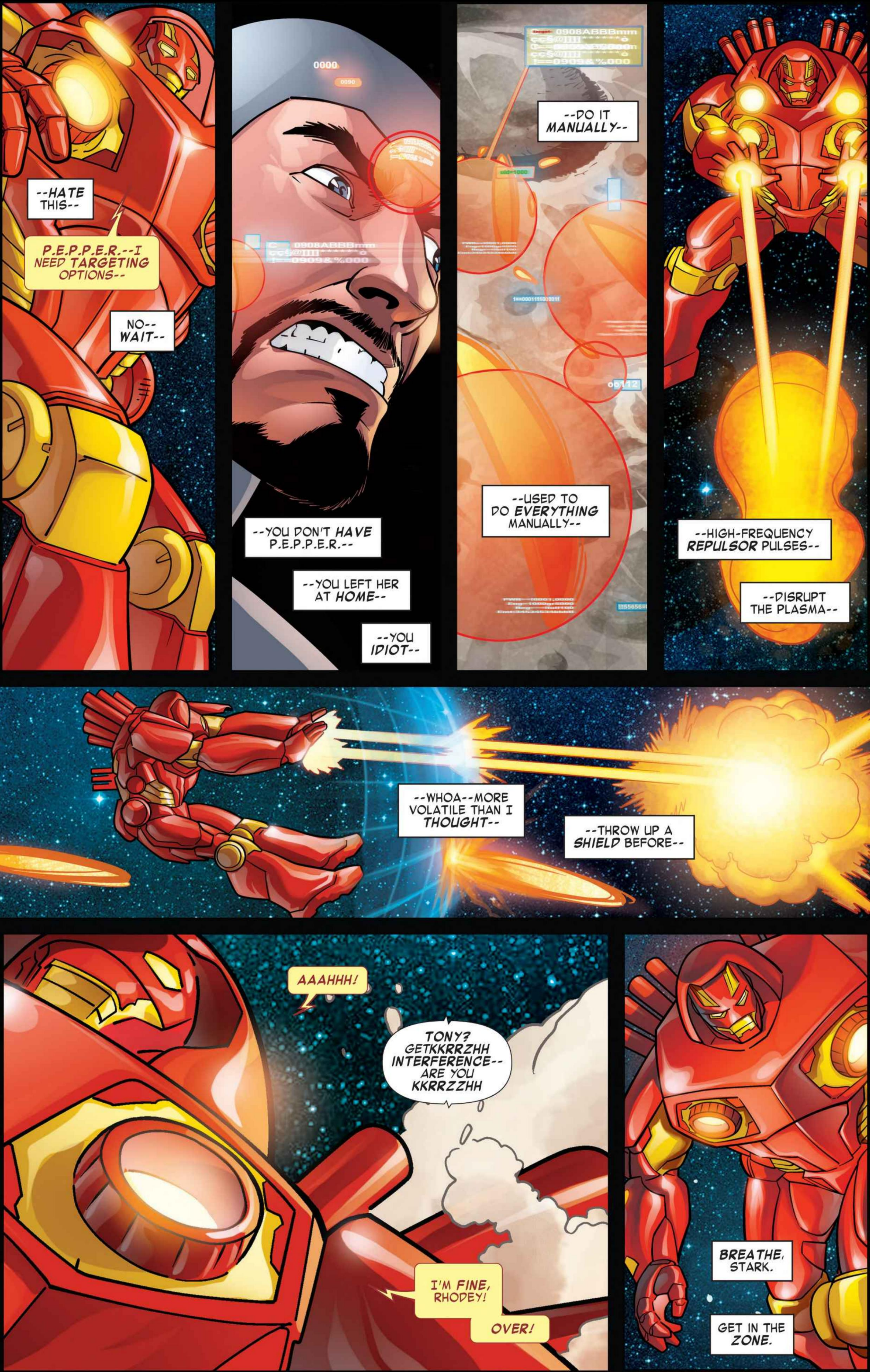

FOR THIS, O MY BROTHERS...
FOR THIS, THEY WILL COME BACK.
BACK TO THE PLACE THEY STOLE FROM US!
CLKK CLKK CLKK
STOLE FROM US AND THREW AWAY!
BACK TO THE MAGICAL WORLD THEY FORGOT ABOUT!
BACK TO THE DREAMS AND WISHES THEY LEFT TO DIE!
AND WILL WE FORGIVE THEM FOR IT, O MY BROTHERS? WILL WE?
WILL WE?
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK

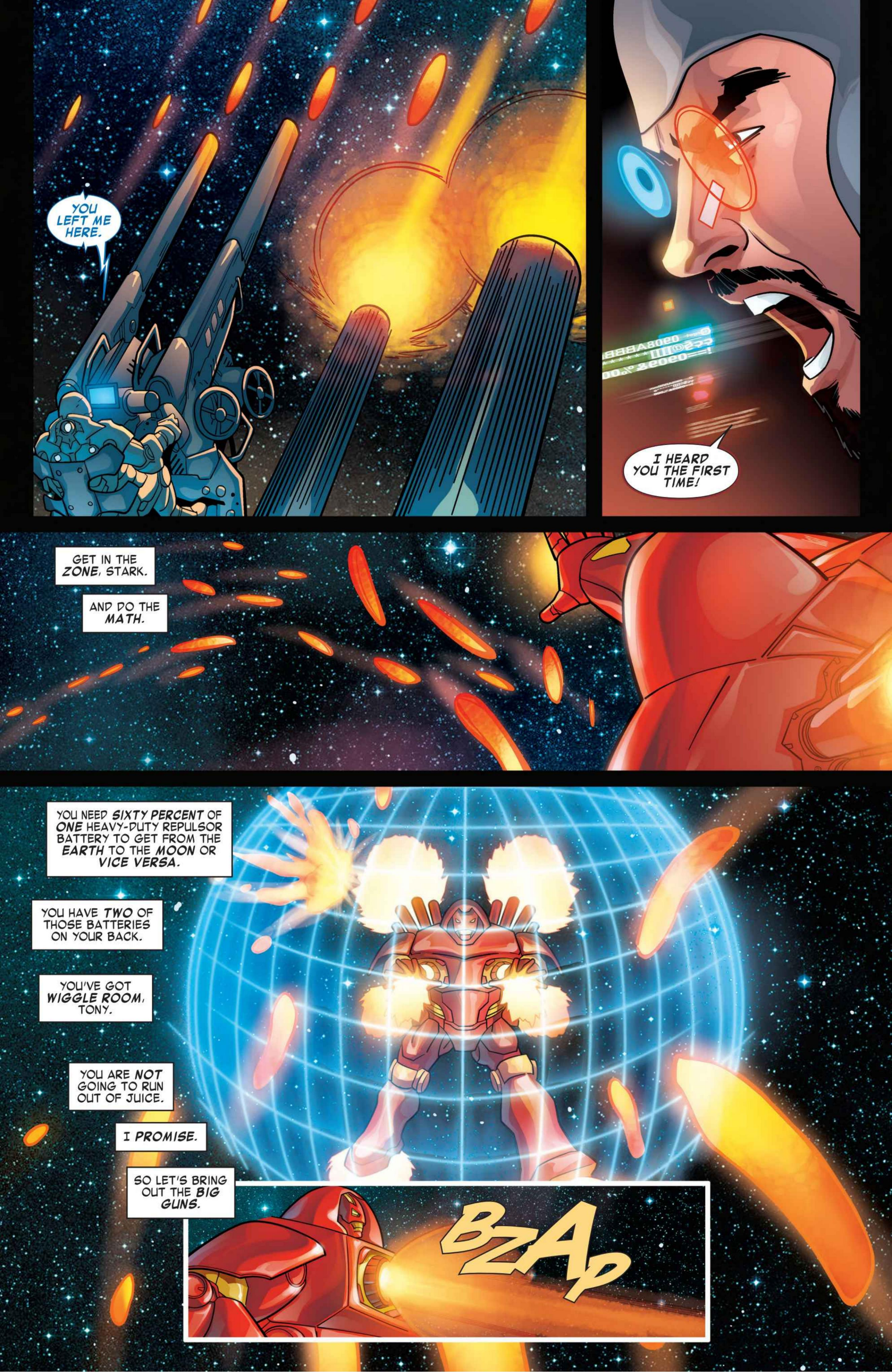

NO. NEVER.
LET THEM COME BACK. LET THEM TRY TO TAKE OUR MERCURY FROM US. WE ARE READY.
IN THE NAME OF SORROW. IN THE NAME OF LOSS AND HEARTBREAK AND PAIN.
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
THE MOON HAS DECLARED WAR.
ON EARTH!

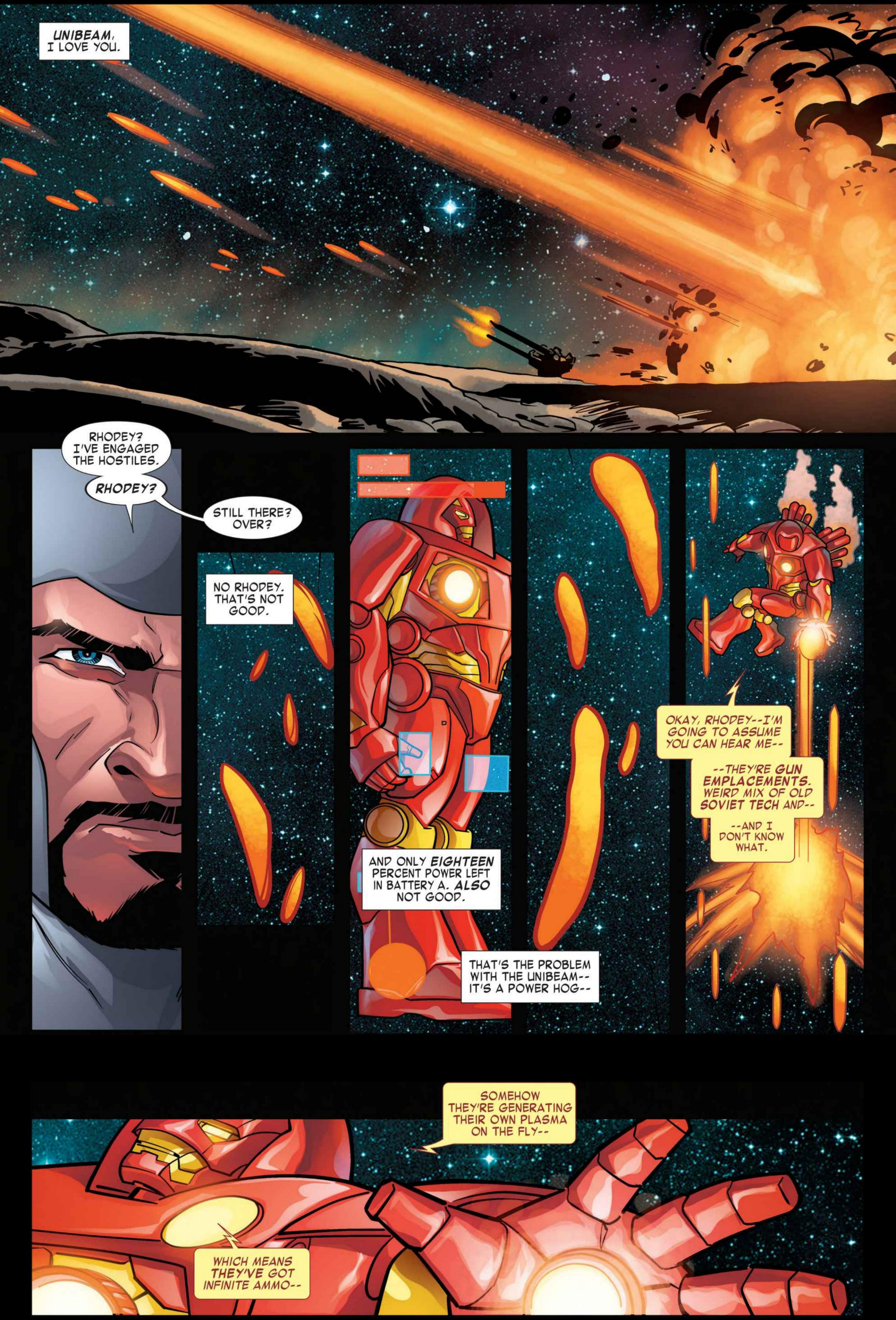

HEH.
GOT A MESSAGE FROM THE ACTION MAN.
"I'M HAPPY."
"HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY TOO."
JIM RHODES, MY BEST FRIEND, IS A SMALL, TINNY VOICE IN THE ENDLESS DARK, SWAPPING BOWIE LYRICS IN BETWEEN THE STATIC.
IT'S LONELY OUT HERE.
OCCASIONALLY, THE AVENGERS CHIME IN WITH A SITUATION REPORT. THEY'RE STAYING ON EARTH--GUARDING AGAINST ANY MORE MISSILES DROPPING OUT OF THE SKY UNTIL I'VE HANDLED THE RECON.
IT'S A JOB FOR ME. TELEPORTERS CAN'T HANDLE THE DISTANCE, AND IT'S TOO SHORT A DISTANCE FOR WARP SPEED. THE SATURN V ARMOR IS THE FASTEST AND BEST WAY UP HERE.
OR SO I KEEP TELLING MYSELF.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE **P.E.P.P.E.R.**, MY A.I. SYSTEM, ON BOARD THIS THING--I ENDED UP SACRIFICING ALL THE LUXURIES LIKE THAT TO CONSERVE BATTERY POWER.
BECAUSE IF THESE TWO GIANT **BATTERIES** ON MY BACK RUN OUT OF **JUICE** UP HERE?
I'M DEAD.

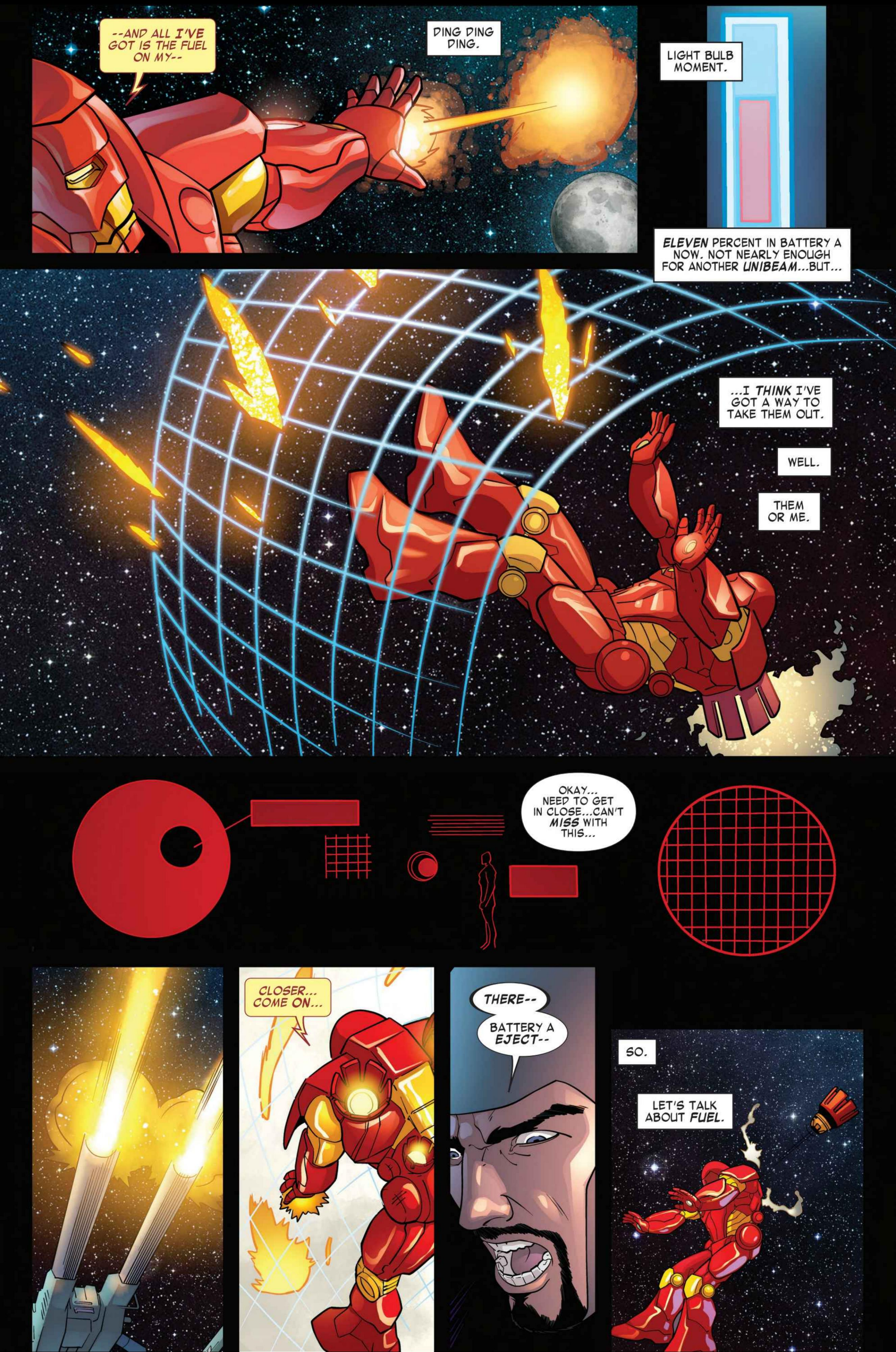

IF I USE TOO MUCH POWER--
IF I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH SPARE TO GET BACK TO EARTH--
THAT'S THAT.
NO TAKE-BACKS, NO CONTINUES--
MY ONLY OPTIONS ARE LEAVE MY CORPSE ON THE MOON OR LET IT DRIFT IN THE VOID.
OKAY, COMING INTO RANGE NOW. BOOT UP SCANNERS...
TRACK ORIGIN POINT OF THE ORIGINAL PROJECTILES...
...
HUH.
KKRRZZZH
TONY? YOU SAY SOMETHING?
I SAID "HUH."
AS IN, "HUH, THAT SURE IS A BUNCH OF WEIRD, INEXPLICABLE ENERGY SIGNATURES." OVER.
INEXPLICABLE? AS IN WHAT? AS IN BAD?
OVER.
I CAN'T EXPLICK THE INEXPLICABLE, RHODEY.
I'LL LET YOU KNOW. OVER.
AND THE CLOSER I GET, THE MORE INEXPLICABLE THE READINGS GET.
FAMILIAR, THOUGH--
--IN FACT, CREEPILY CONSISTENT WITH THAT MYSTERY METAL BACK IN L.A....
IT'D BE NICE TO--
PING
UH-OH.
GUN EMPLACEMENTS.
I SWEAR THEY WEREN'T THERE A FEW SECONDS AGO. IT'S LIKE THEY JUST...FORMED.
THEY'RE EERILY QUIET. THE CONTROL CHAIRS ARE EMPTY...

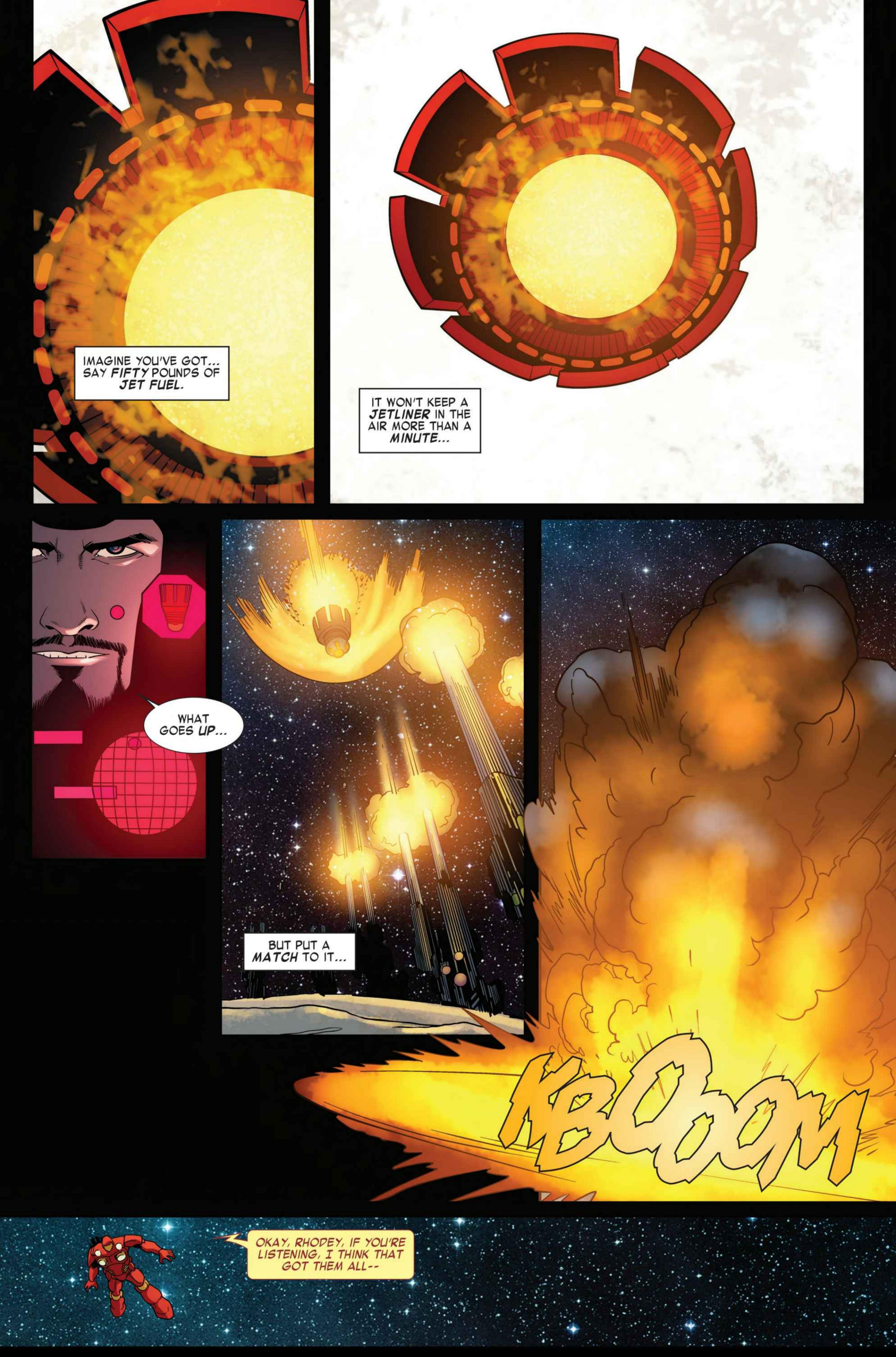

UNTIL SUDDENLY, THEY'RE NOT.
YOU
LEFT
THEY ALL SPEAK THROUGH MY RADIO WITH THE SAME VOICE.
ALL OF YOU.
RUSSIAN.
AMERICAN.
HUMAN.
YOU LEFT.
THE MOON.
WITH THE SAME *MIND*.
YOU!
LEFT!
ME!
...RHODEY?
I THINK IT'S INEXPLICABLE *BAD*.
THE CRUDE *TARGETING SYSTEM* IN THIS SUIT DOESN'T KNOW WHICH GUN TO GO FOR FIRST. NEITHER DO *I*, TO BE HONEST.
OBVIOUSLY, THEY DON'T HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM.
OKAY--LOOKS LIKE PACKETS OF SUPERHOT PLASMA--
--NOTHING YOU CAN'T *HANDLE*, TONY--
--GOD, I *HATE* THIS--HOURS OF BOREDOM AND THEN I'M FIGHTING FOR MY *LIFE*--
--*HATE* THIS--

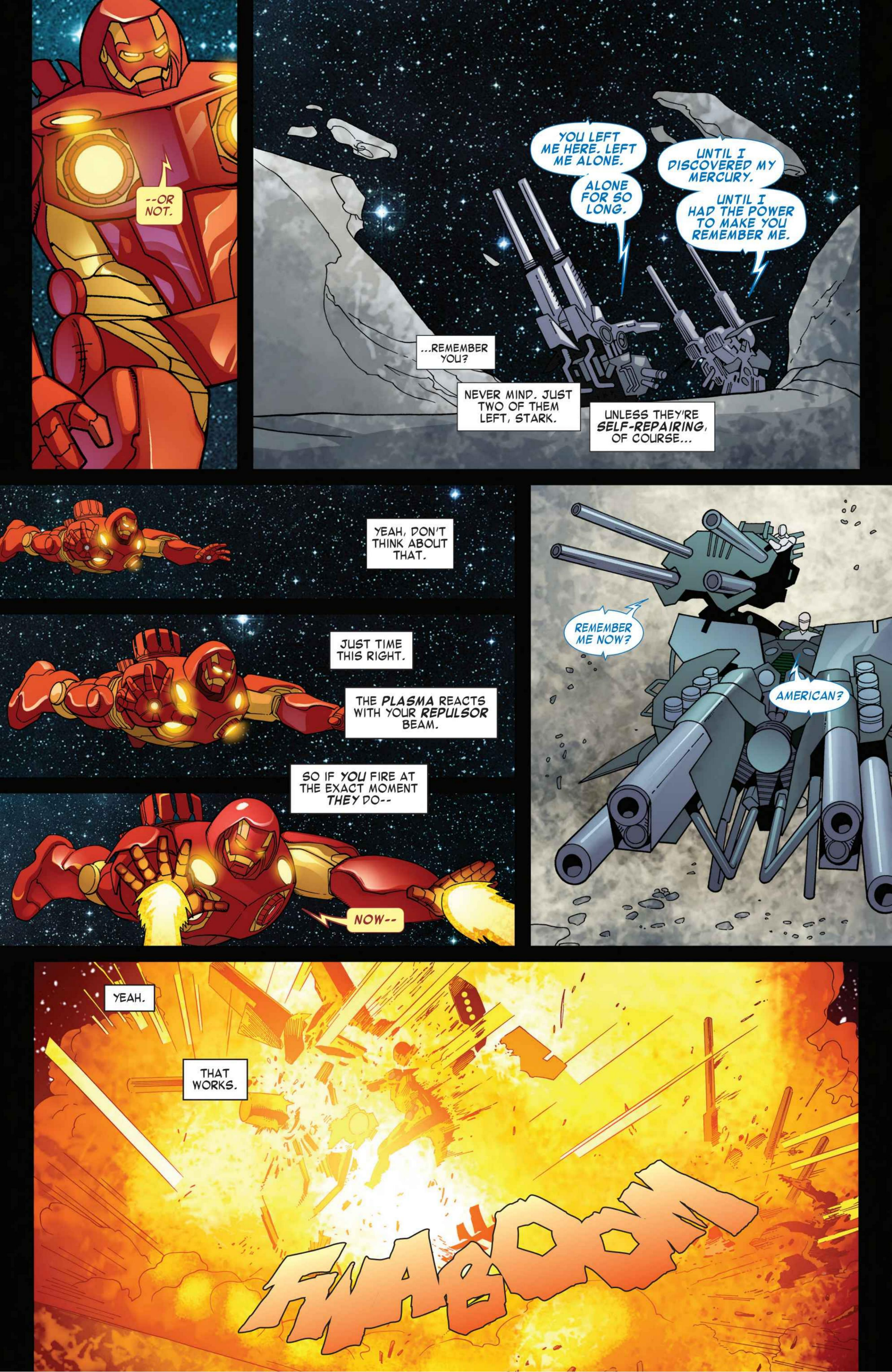

--HATE THIS--
P.E.P.P.E.R.--I NEED TARGETING OPTIONS--
NO--WAIT--
--YOU DON'T HAVE P.E.P.P.E.R.--
--YOU LEFT HER AT HOME--
--YOU IDIOT--
--DO IT MANUALLY--
--USED TO DO EVERYTHING MANUALLY--
--HIGH-FREQUENCY REPULSOR PULSES--
--DISRUPT THE PLASMA--
--WHOA--MORE VOLATILE THAN I THOUGHT--
--THROW UP A SHIELD BEFORE--
AAAHHH!
TONY? GETKKRRZHH INTERFERENCE--ARE YOU KKRRZZHH
I'M FINE, RHODEY!
OVER!
BREATHE, STARK.
GET IN THE ZONE.

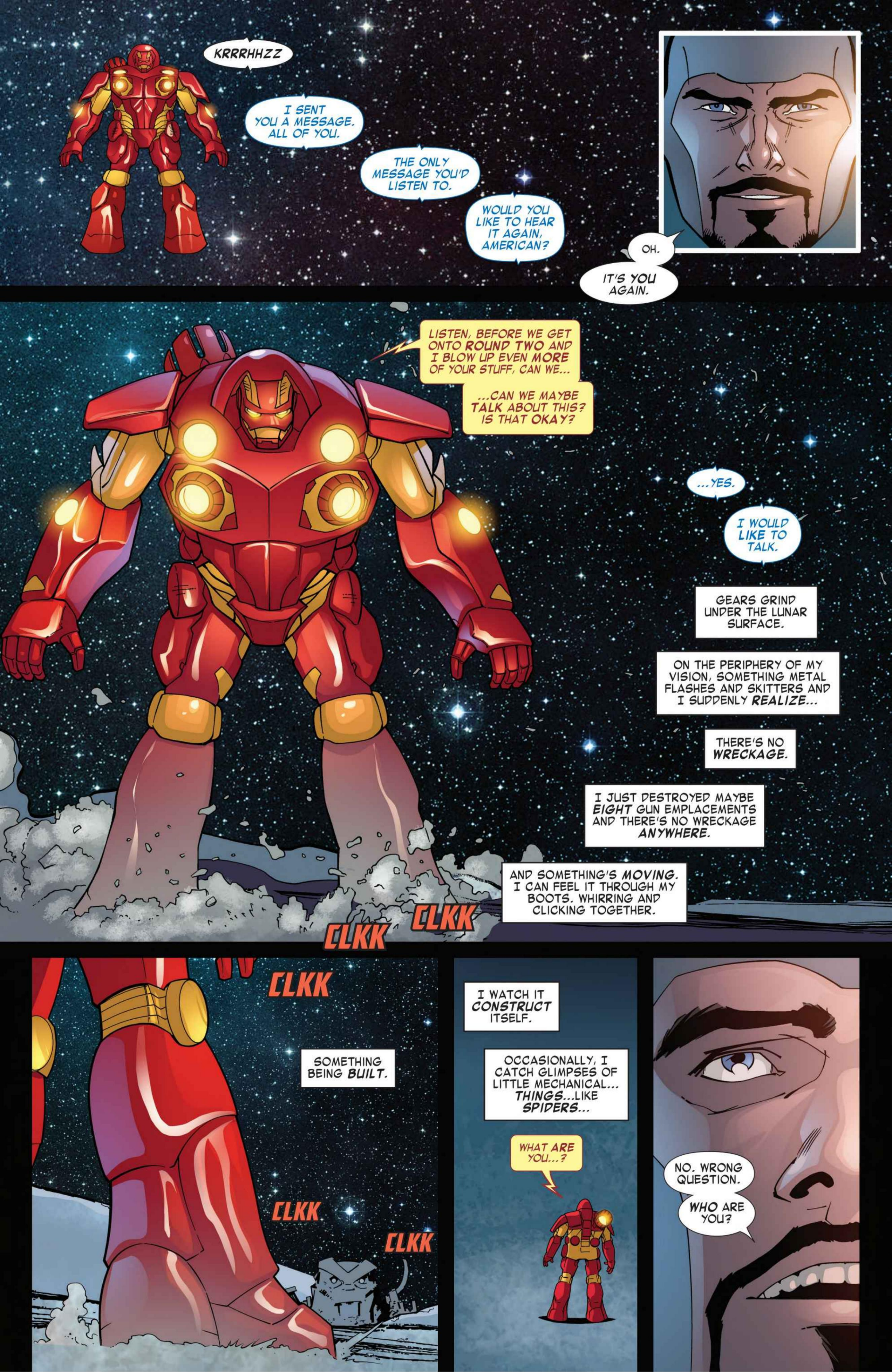

YOU LEFT ME HERE.
I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME!
GET IN THE ZONE, STARK.
AND DO THE MATH.
YOU NEED SIXTY PERCENT OF ONE HEAVY-DUTY REPULSOR BATTERY TO GET FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON OR VICE VERSA.
YOU HAVE TWO OF THOSE BATTERIES ON YOUR BACK.
YOU'VE GOT WIGGLE ROOM, TONY.
YOU ARE NOT GOING TO RUN OUT OF JUICE.
I PROMISE.
SO LET'S BRING OUT THE BIG GUNS.
BZAP

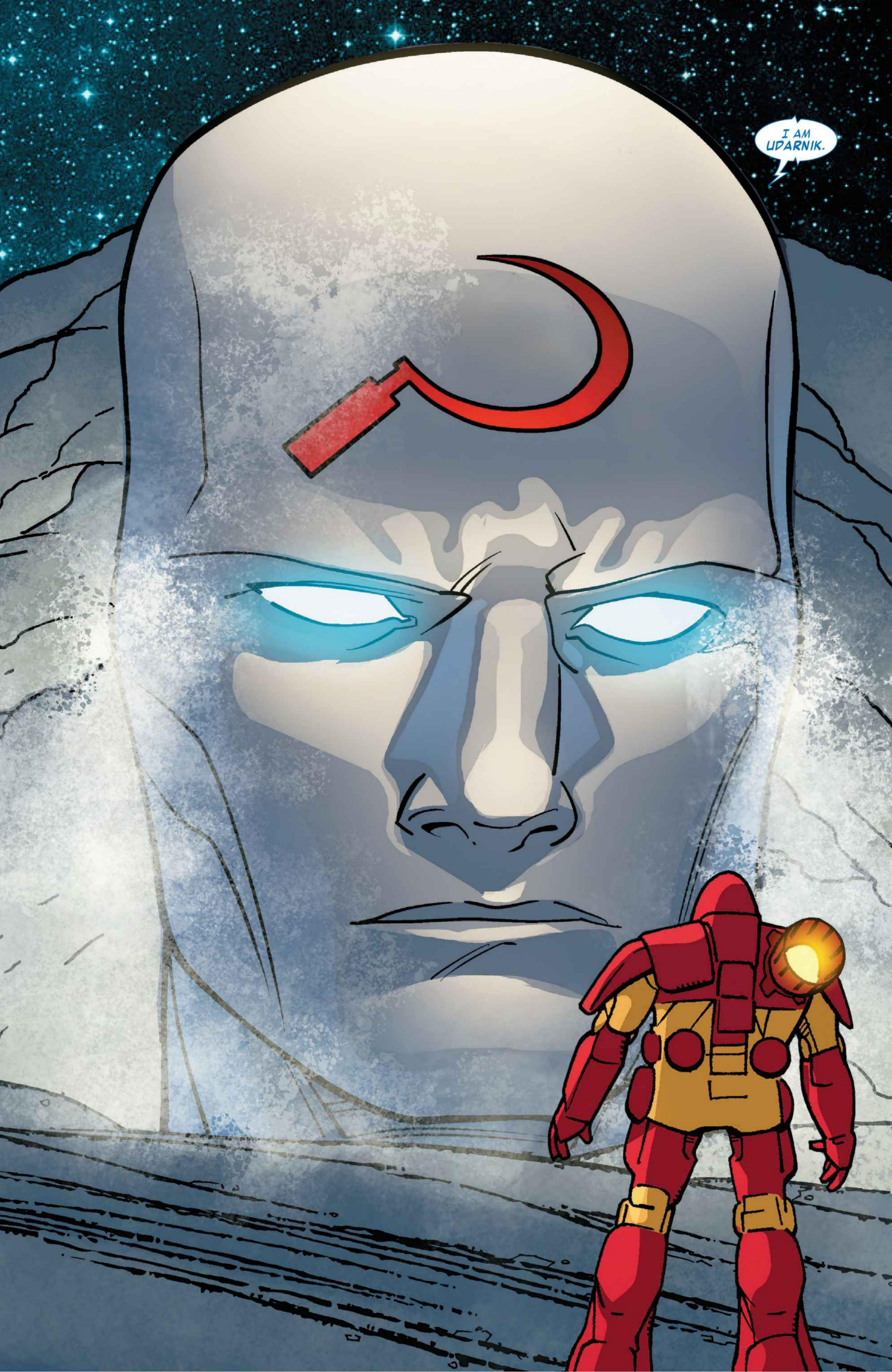

UNIBEAM, I LOVE YOU.
RHODEY? I'VE ENGAGED THE HOSTILES.
RHODEY?
STILL THERE? OVER?
NO RHODEY. THAT'S NOT GOOD.
AND ONLY EIGHTEEN PERCENT POWER LEFT IN BATTERY A. ALSO NOT GOOD.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THE UNIBEAM--IT'S A POWER HOG--
OKAY, RHODEY--I'M GOING TO ASSUME YOU CAN HEAR ME--
--THEY'RE GUN EMPLACEMENTS. WEIRD MIX OF OLD SOVIET TECH AND--
--AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT.
SOMEHOW THEY'RE GENERATING THEIR OWN PLASMA ON THE FLY--
WHICH MEANS THEY'VE GOT INFINITE AMMO--

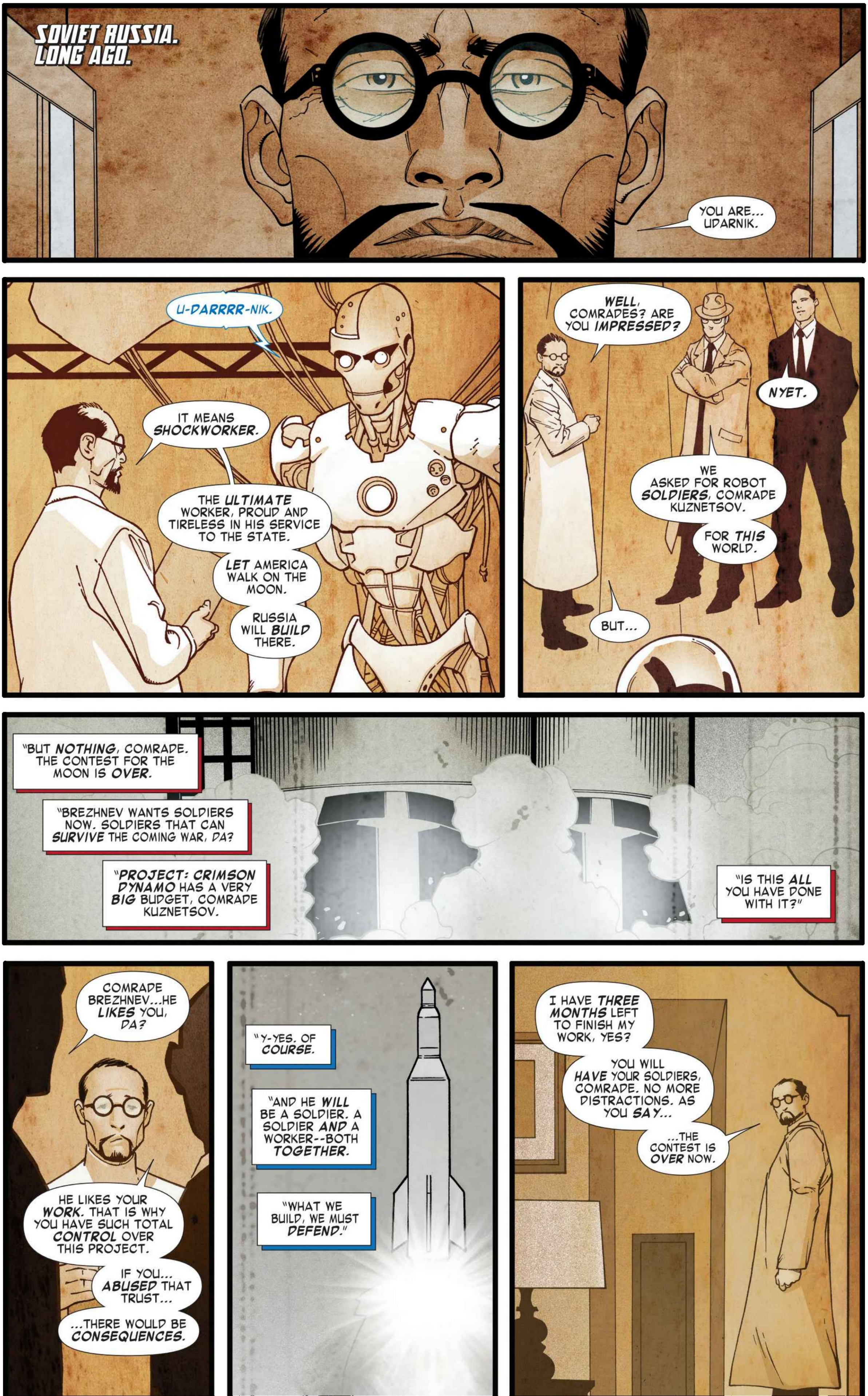

--AND ALL *I'VE* GOT IS THE FUEL ON MY--
DING DING DING.
LIGHT BULB MOMENT.
ELEVEN PERCENT IN BATTERY A NOW. NOT NEARLY ENOUGH FOR ANOTHER *UNIBEAM*...BUT...
...I *THINK* I'VE GOT A WAY TO TAKE THEM OUT.
WELL.
THEM OR ME.
OKAY... NEED TO GET IN CLOSE...CAN'T *MISS* WITH THIS...
CLOSER... COME ON...
THERE--
BATTERY A *EJECT--*
SO.
LET'S TALK ABOUT *FUEL*.

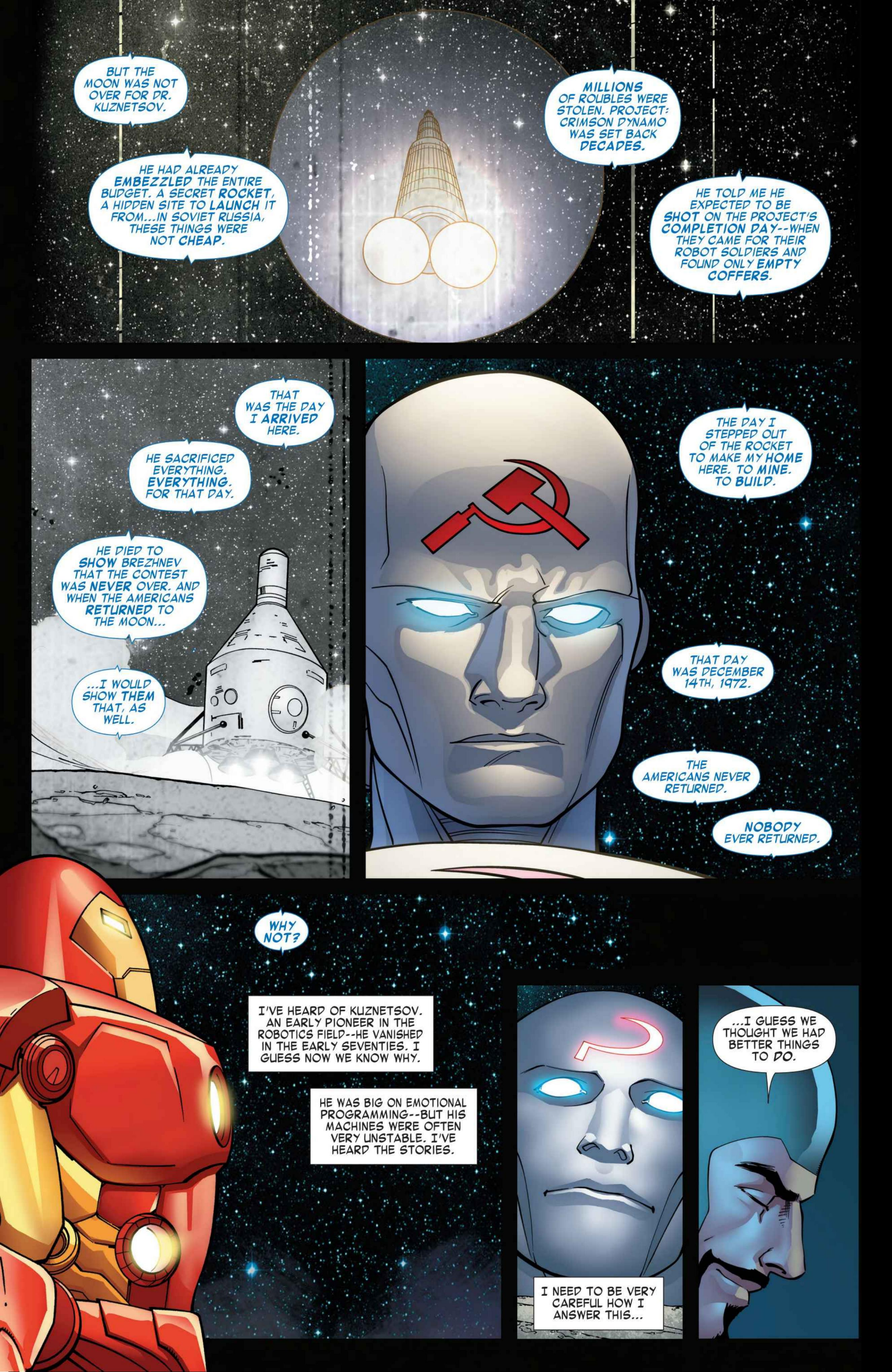

IMAGINE YOU'VE GOT... SAY *FIFTY* POUNDS OF ***JET FUEL.***
IT WON'T KEEP A ***JETLINER*** IN THE AIR MORE THAN A ***MINUTE...***
WHAT GOES *UP...*
BUT PUT A ***MATCH*** TO IT...
KBOOOM
OKAY, RHODEY, IF YOU'RE LISTENING, I THINK THAT GOT THEM ALL--

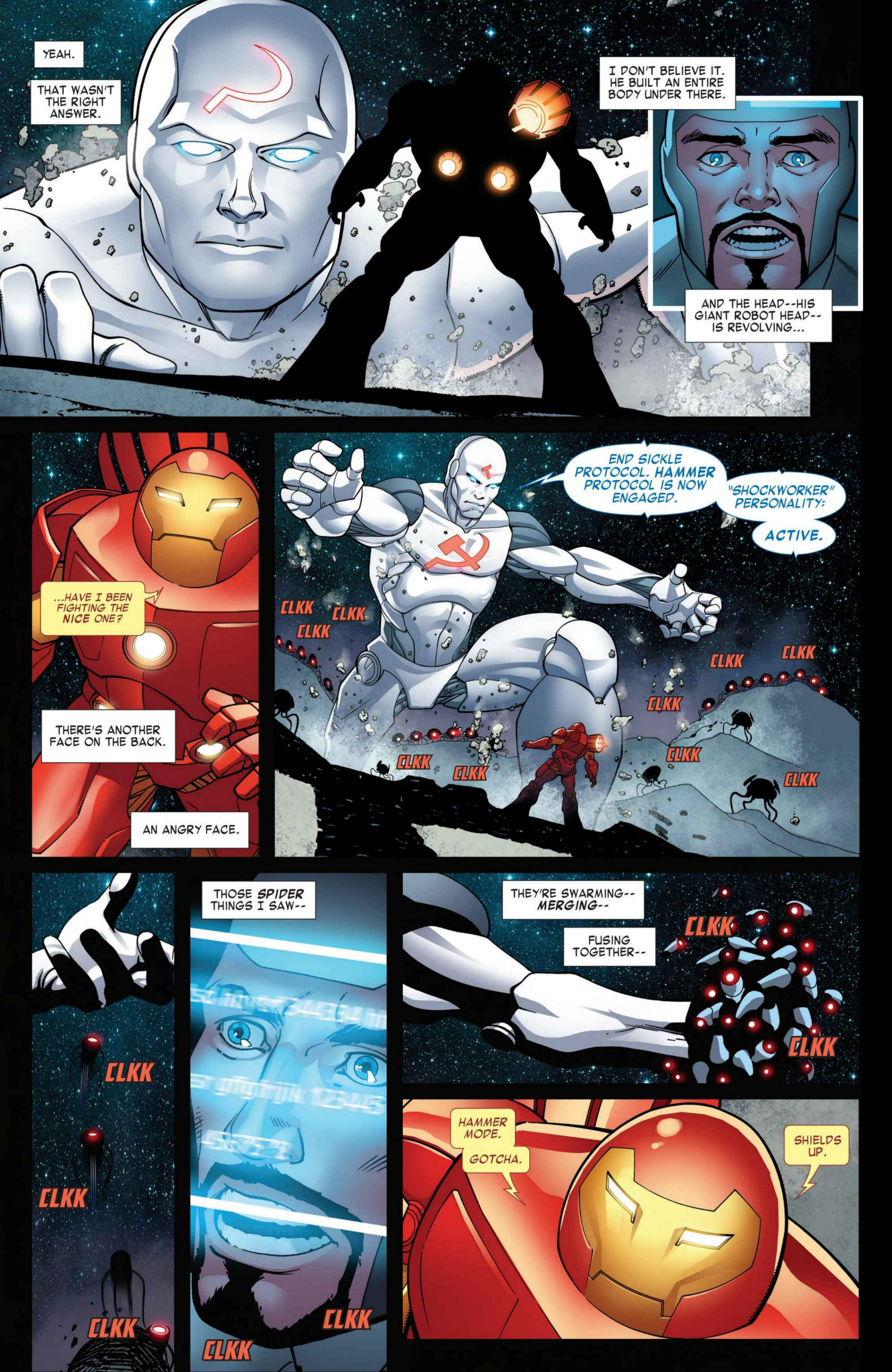

--OR NOT.
YOU LEFT ME HERE. LEFT ME ALONE.
ALONE FOR SO LONG.
UNTIL I DISCOVERED MY MERCURY.
UNTIL I HAD THE POWER TO MAKE YOU REMEMBER ME.
...REMEMBER YOU?
NEVER MIND. JUST TWO OF THEM LEFT, STARK.
UNLESS THEY'RE *SELF-REPAIRING*, OF COURSE...
YEAH, DON'T THINK ABOUT THAT.
JUST TIME THIS RIGHT.
THE *PLASMA* REACTS WITH YOUR *REPULSOR* BEAM.
SO IF *YOU* FIRE AT THE EXACT MOMENT *THEY* DO--
NOW--
REMEMBER ME NOW?
AMERICAN?
YEAH.
THAT WORKS.
FWABOOM

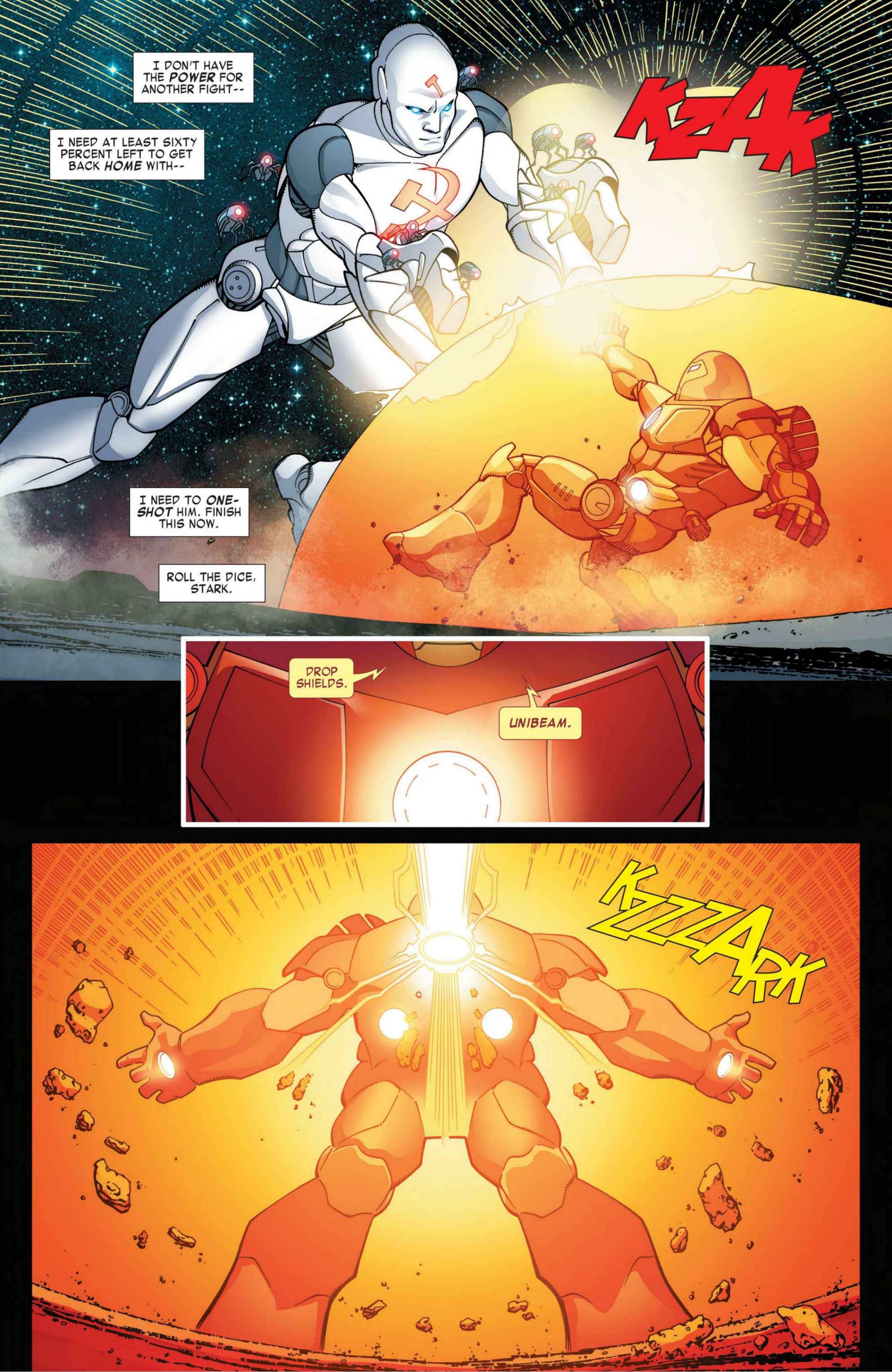

KRRRHHZZ
I SENT YOU A MESSAGE. ALL OF YOU.
THE ONLY MESSAGE YOU'D LISTEN TO.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT AGAIN, AMERICAN?
OH.
IT'S YOU AGAIN.
LISTEN, BEFORE WE GET ONTO ROUND TWO AND I BLOW UP EVEN MORE OF YOUR STUFF, CAN WE...
...CAN WE MAYBE TALK ABOUT THIS? IS THAT OKAY?
...YES.
I WOULD LIKE TO TALK.
GEARS GRIND UNDER THE LUNAR SURFACE.
ON THE PERIPHERY OF MY VISION, SOMETHING METAL FLASHES AND SKITTERS AND I SUDDENLY REALIZE...
THERE'S NO WRECKAGE.
I JUST DESTROYED MAYBE EIGHT GUN EMPLACEMENTS AND THERE'S NO WRECKAGE ANYWHERE.
AND SOMETHING'S MOVING. I CAN FEEL IT THROUGH MY BOOTS. WHIRRING AND CLICKING TOGETHER.
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
SOMETHING BEING BUILT.
CLKK
CLKK
I WATCH IT CONSTRUCT ITSELF.
OCCASIONALLY, I CATCH GLIMPSES OF LITTLE MECHANICAL... THINGS...LIKE SPIDERS...
WHAT ARE YOU...?
NO. WRONG QUESTION.
WHO ARE YOU?

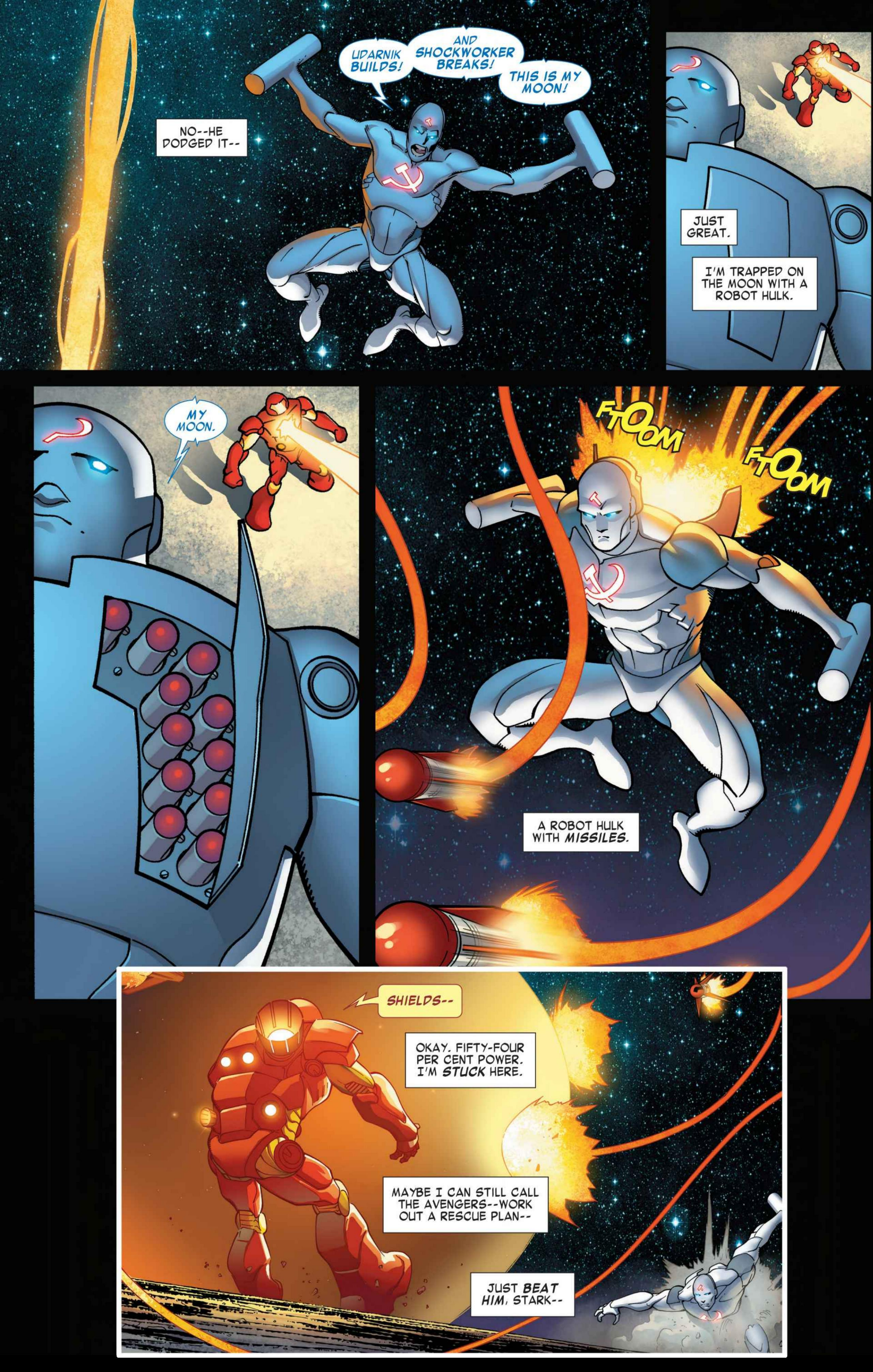

I AM UDARNIK.

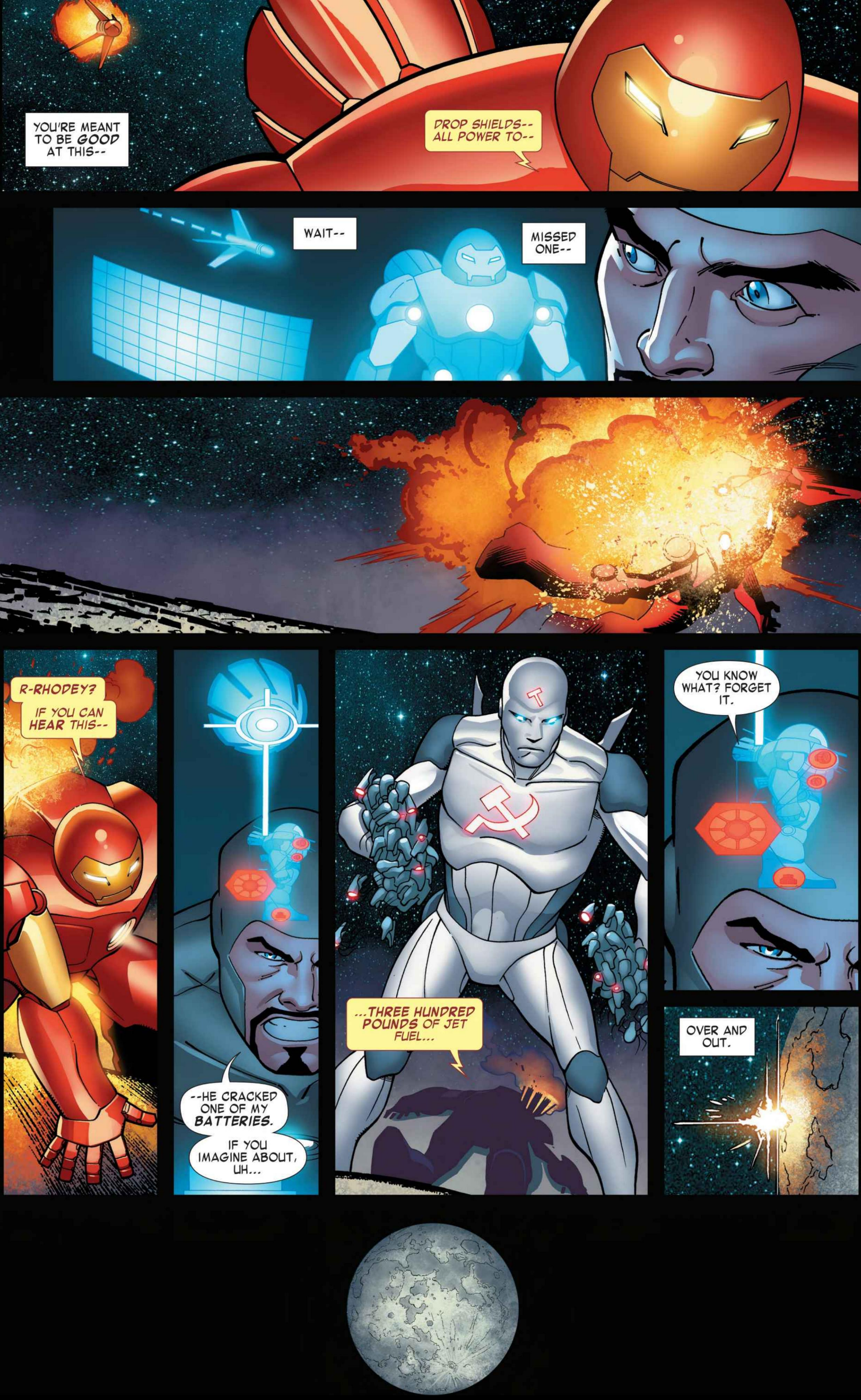

SOVIET RUSSIA. LONG AGO.
YOU ARE... UDARNIK.
U-DARRRR-NIK.
IT MEANS SHOCKWORKER.
THE ULTIMATE WORKER, PROUD AND TIRELESS IN HIS SERVICE TO THE STATE.
LET AMERICA WALK ON THE MOON.
RUSSIA WILL BUILD THERE.
WELL, COMRADES? ARE YOU IMPRESSED?
NYET.
WE ASKED FOR ROBOT SOLDIERS, COMRADE KUZNETSOV.
FOR THIS WORLD.
BUT...
"BUT NOTHING, COMRADE. THE CONTEST FOR THE MOON IS OVER.
"BREZHNEV WANTS SOLDIERS NOW. SOLDIERS THAT CAN SURVIVE THE COMING WAR, DA?
"PROJECT: CRIMSON DYNAMO HAS A VERY BIG BUDGET, COMRADE KUZNETSOV.
"IS THIS ALL YOU HAVE DONE WITH IT?"
COMRADE BREZHNEV...HE LIKES YOU, DA?
HE LIKES YOUR WORK. THAT IS WHY YOU HAVE SUCH TOTAL CONTROL OVER THIS PROJECT.
IF YOU... ABUSED THAT TRUST...
...THERE WOULD BE CONSEQUENCES.
"Y-YES. OF COURSE.
"AND HE WILL BE A SOLDIER. A SOLDIER AND A WORKER--BOTH TOGETHER.
"WHAT WE BUILD, WE MUST DEFEND."
I HAVE THREE MONTHS LEFT TO FINISH MY WORK, YES?
YOU WILL HAVE YOUR SOLDIERS, COMRADE. NO MORE DISTRACTIONS. AS YOU SAY...
...THE CONTEST IS OVER NOW.

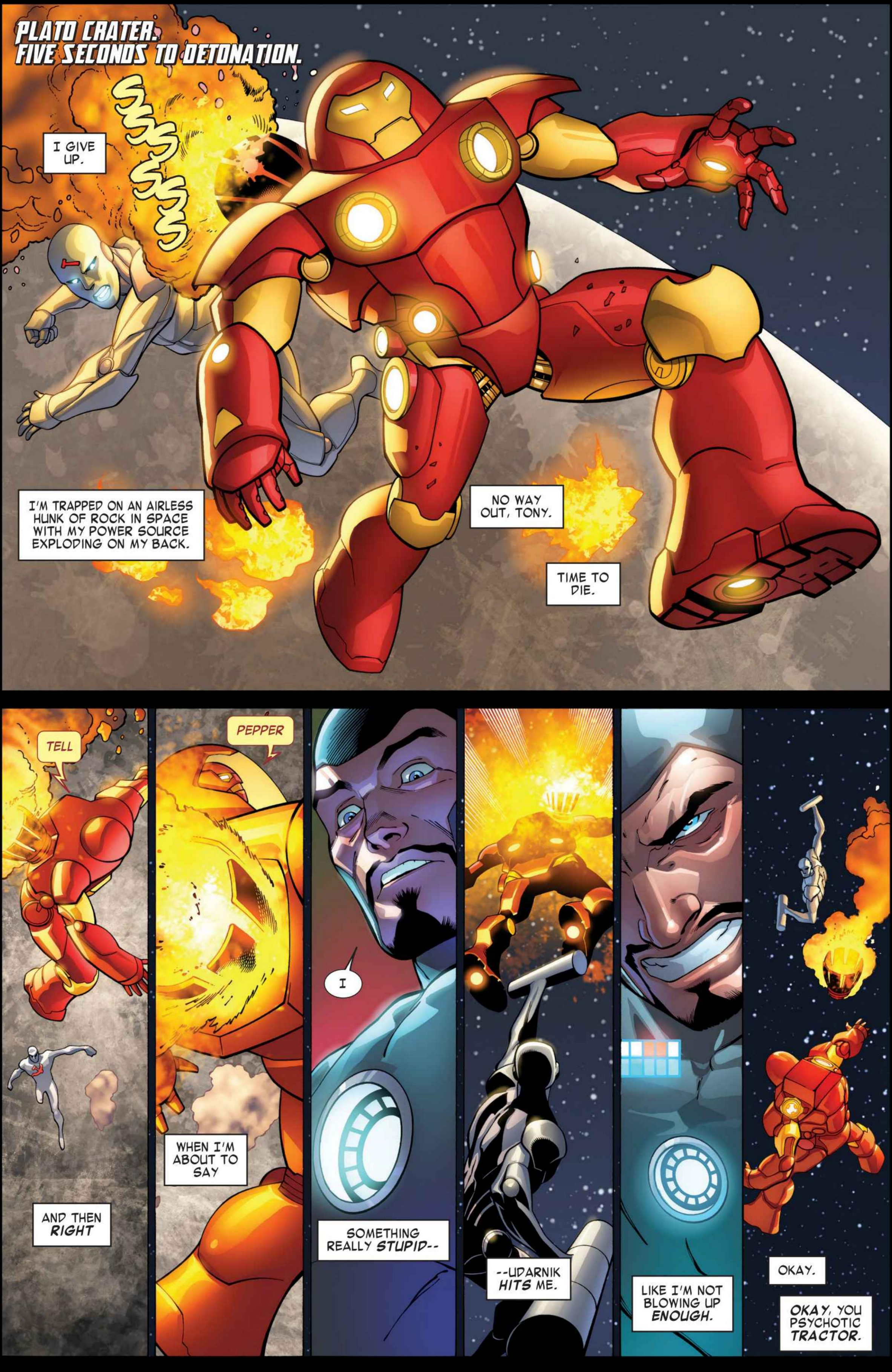

BUT THE MOON WAS NOT OVER FOR DR. KUZNETSOV.
HE HAD ALREADY EMBEZZLED THE ENTIRE BUDGET. A SECRET ROCKET, A HIDDEN SITE TO LAUNCH IT FROM...IN SOVIET RUSSIA, THESE THINGS WERE NOT CHEAP.
MILLIONS OF ROUBLES WERE STOLEN. PROJECT: CRIMSON DYNAMO WAS SET BACK DECADES.
HE TOLD ME HE EXPECTED TO BE SHOT ON THE PROJECT'S COMPLETION DAY--WHEN THEY CAME FOR THEIR ROBOT SOLDIERS AND FOUND ONLY EMPTY COFFERS.
THAT WAS THE DAY I ARRIVED HERE.
HE SACRIFICED EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING. FOR THAT DAY.
HE DIED TO SHOW BREZHNEV THAT THE CONTEST WAS NEVER OVER. AND WHEN THE AMERICANS RETURNED TO THE MOON...
...I WOULD SHOW THEM THAT, AS WELL.
THE DAY I STEPPED OUT OF THE ROCKET TO MAKE MY HOME HERE. TO MINE. TO BUILD.
THAT DAY WAS DECEMBER 14TH, 1972.
THE AMERICANS NEVER RETURNED.
NOBODY EVER RETURNED.
WHY NOT?
I'VE HEARD OF KUZNETSOV. AN EARLY PIONEER IN THE ROBOTICS FIELD--HE VANISHED IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES. I GUESS NOW WE KNOW WHY.
HE WAS BIG ON EMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING--BUT HIS MACHINES WERE OFTEN VERY UNSTABLE. I'VE HEARD THE STORIES.
I NEED TO BE VERY CAREFUL HOW I ANSWER THIS...
...I GUESS WE THOUGHT WE HAD BETTER THINGS TO DO.

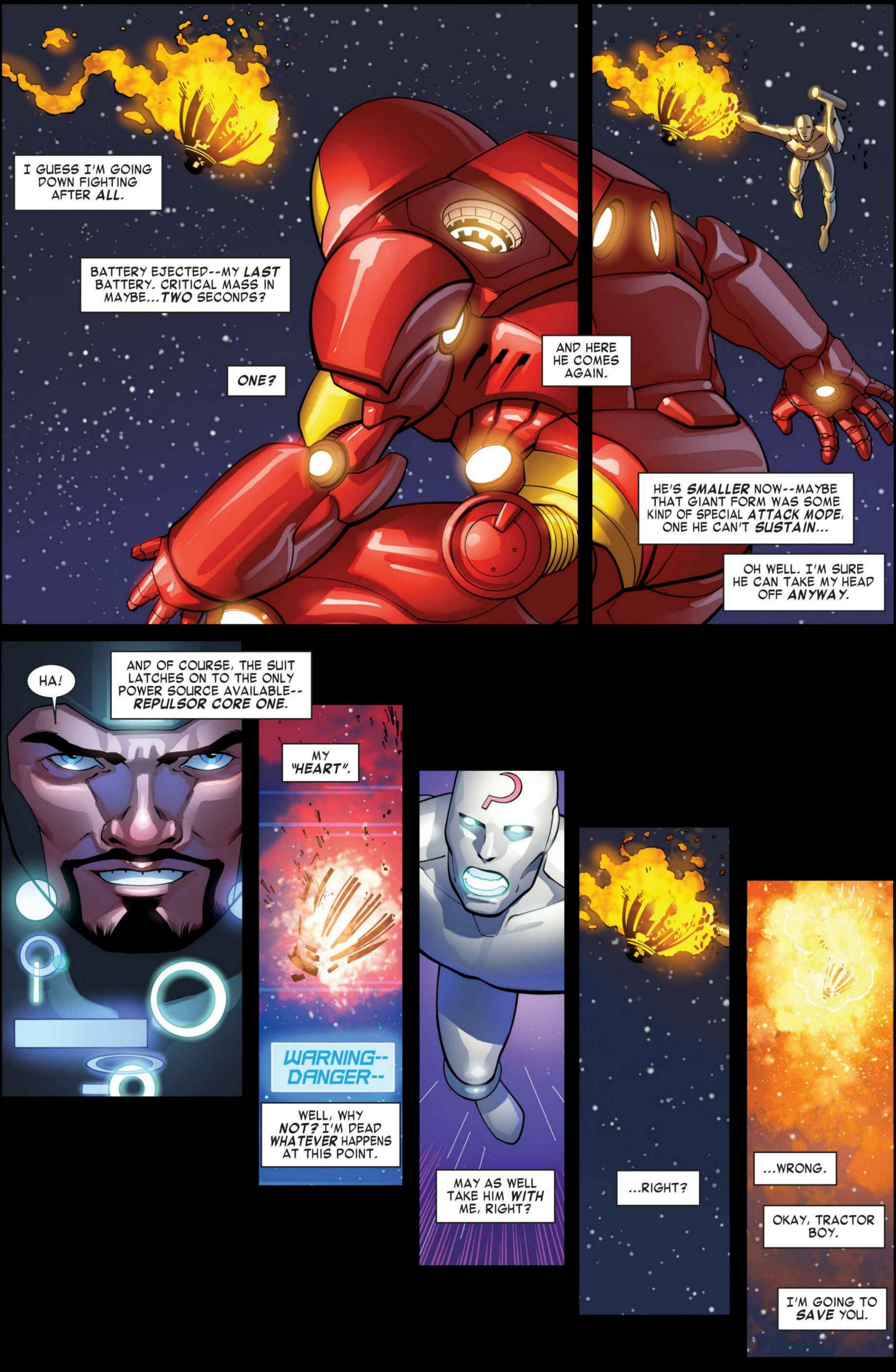

YEAH.
THAT WASN'T THE RIGHT ANSWER.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. HE BUILT AN ENTIRE BODY UNDER THERE.
AND THE HEAD--HIS GIANT ROBOT HEAD--IS REVOLVING...
...HAVE I BEEN FIGHTING THE NICE ONE?
THERE'S ANOTHER FACE ON THE BACK.
AN ANGRY FACE.
END SICKLE PROTOCOL. HAMMER PROTOCOL IS NOW ENGAGED.
"SHOCKWORKER" PERSONALITY:
ACTIVE.
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
THOSE SPIDER THINGS I SAW--
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
CLKK
THEY'RE SWARMING--MERGING--
FUSING TOGETHER--
CLKK
CLKK
HAMMER MODE.
GOTCHA.
SHIELDS UP.

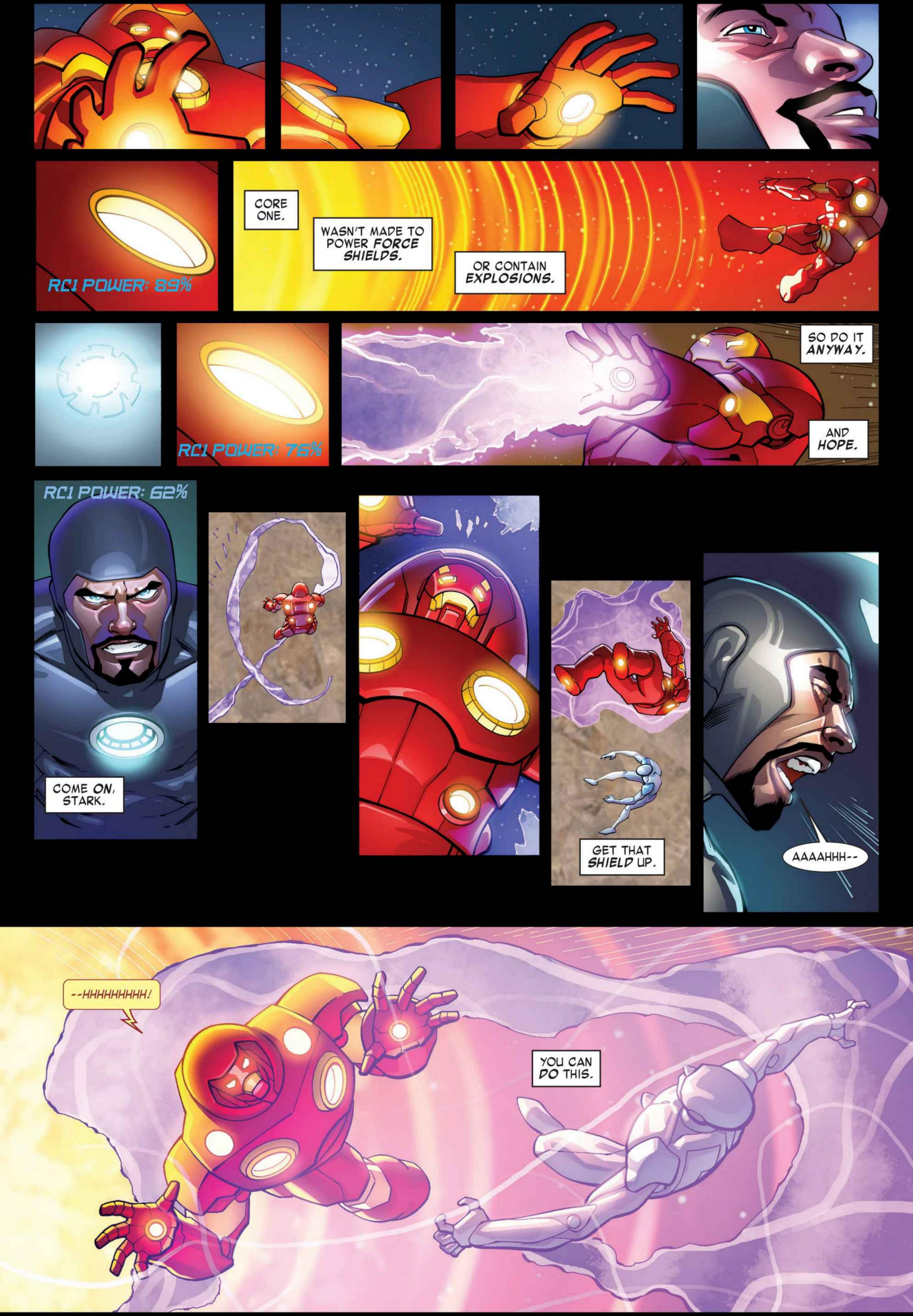

I DON'T HAVE THE *POWER* FOR ANOTHER FIGHT--
I NEED AT LEAST SIXTY PERCENT LEFT TO GET BACK *HOME* WITH--
KZZAK
I NEED TO *ONE-SHOT* HIM. FINISH THIS NOW.
ROLL THE DICE, STARK.
DROP SHIELDS.
UNIBEAM.
KZZZARK

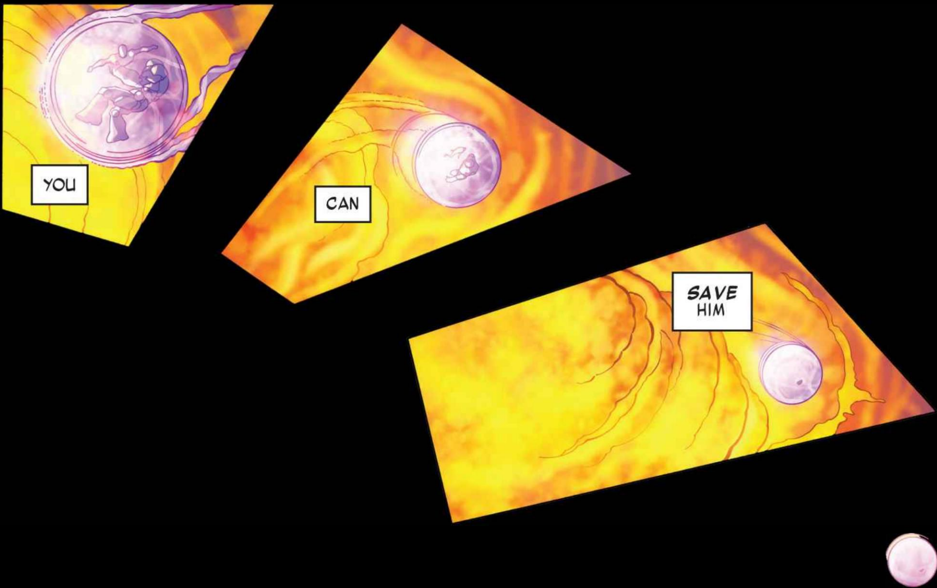

NO--HE DODGED IT--
UDARNIK BUILDS!
AND SHOCKWORKER BREAKS!
THIS IS MY MOON!
JUST GREAT.
I'M TRAPPED ON THE MOON WITH A ROBOT HULK.
MY MOON.
FTOOM
FTOOM
A ROBOT HULK WITH *MISSILES*.
SHIELDS--
OKAY. FIFTY-FOUR PER CENT POWER. I'M *STUCK* HERE.
MAYBE I CAN STILL CALL THE AVENGERS--WORK OUT A RESCUE PLAN--
JUST *BEAT HIM*, STARK--

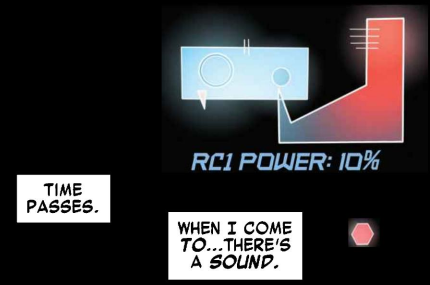

YOU'RE MEANT TO BE **GOOD** AT THIS--
DROP SHIELDS-- ALL POWER TO--
WAIT--
MISSED ONE--
R-RHODEY?
*IF YOU CAN **HEAR** THIS--*
--HE CRACKED ONE OF MY **BATTERIES.**
IF YOU IMAGINE ABOUT, UH...
...THREE HUNDRED POUNDS OF JET FUEL...
YOU KNOW WHAT? FORGET IT.
OVER AND OUT.

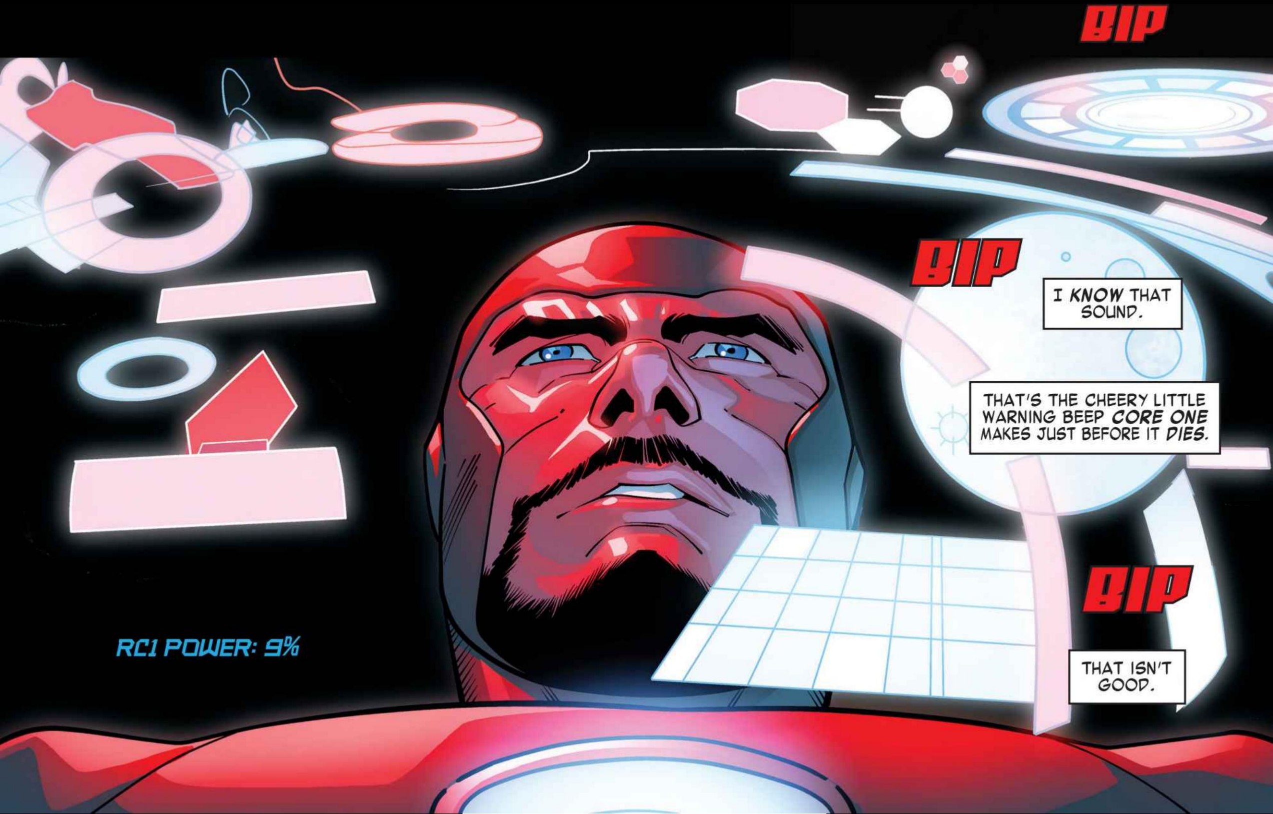

PLATO CRATER.
FIVE SECONDS TO DETONATION.
SSSSSS
I GIVE UP.
I'M TRAPPED ON AN AIRLESS HUNK OF ROCK IN SPACE WITH MY POWER SOURCE EXPLODING ON MY BACK.
NO WAY OUT, TONY.
TIME TO DIE.
TELL
AND THEN RIGHT
PEPPER
WHEN I'M ABOUT TO SAY
I
SOMETHING REALLY STUPID--
--UDARNIK HITS ME.
LIKE I'M NOT BLOWING UP ENOUGH.
OKAY.
OKAY, YOU PSYCHOTIC TRACTOR.

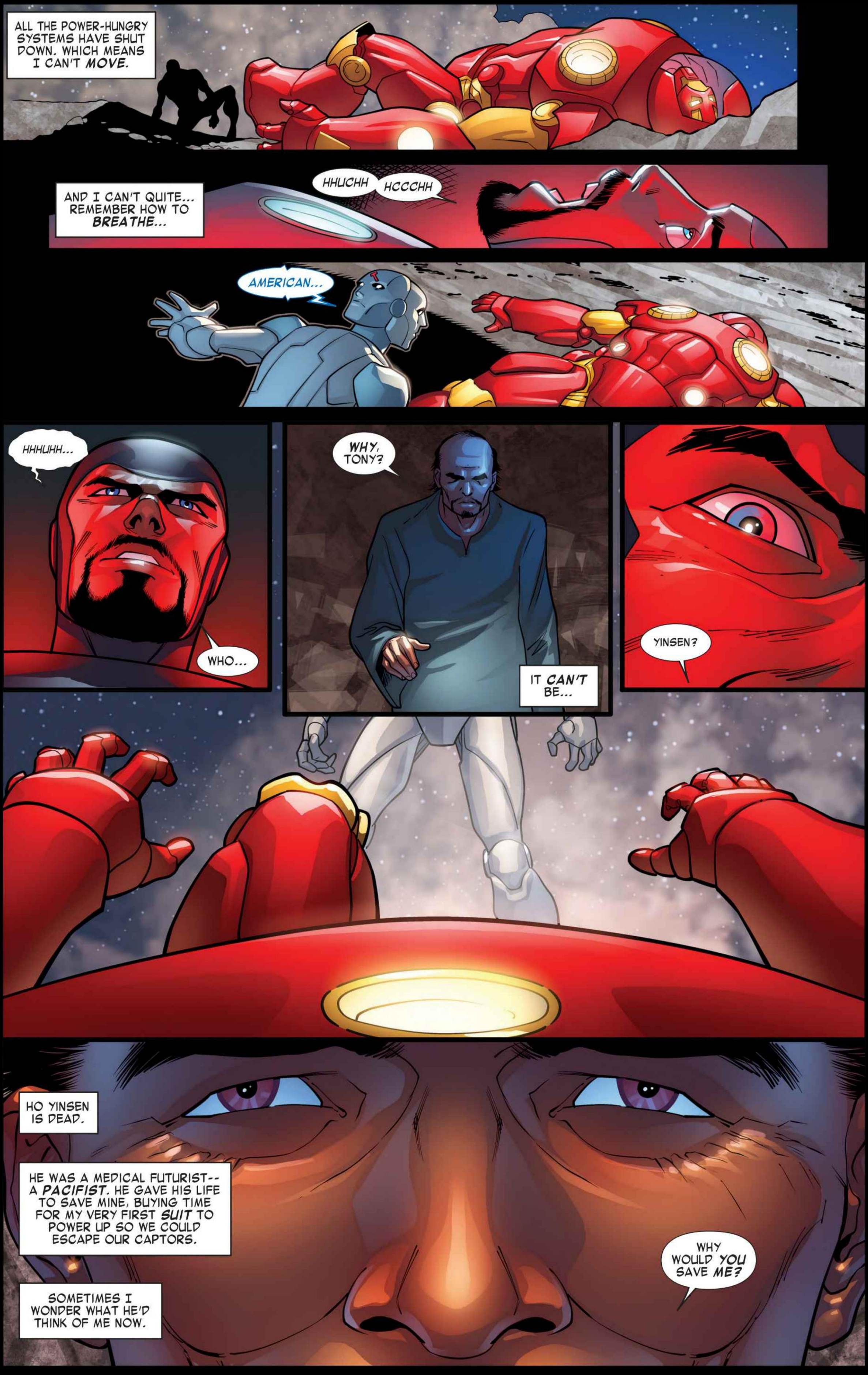

I GUESS I'M GOING DOWN FIGHTING AFTER ALL.
BATTERY EJECTED--MY LAST BATTERY. CRITICAL MASS IN MAYBE...TWO SECONDS?
ONE?
AND HERE HE COMES AGAIN.
HE'S SMALLER NOW--MAYBE THAT GIANT FORM WAS SOME KIND OF SPECIAL ATTACK MODE, ONE HE CAN'T SUSTAIN...
OH WELL. I'M SURE HE CAN TAKE MY HEAD OFF ANYWAY.
HA!
AND OF COURSE, THE SUIT LATCHES ON TO THE ONLY POWER SOURCE AVAILABLE--REPULSOR CORE ONE.
MY "HEART".
WARNING--DANGER--
WELL, WHY NOT? I'M DEAD WHATEVER HAPPENS AT THIS POINT.
MAY AS WELL TAKE HIM WITH ME, RIGHT?
...RIGHT?
...WRONG.
OKAY, TRACTOR BOY.
I'M GOING TO SAVE YOU.

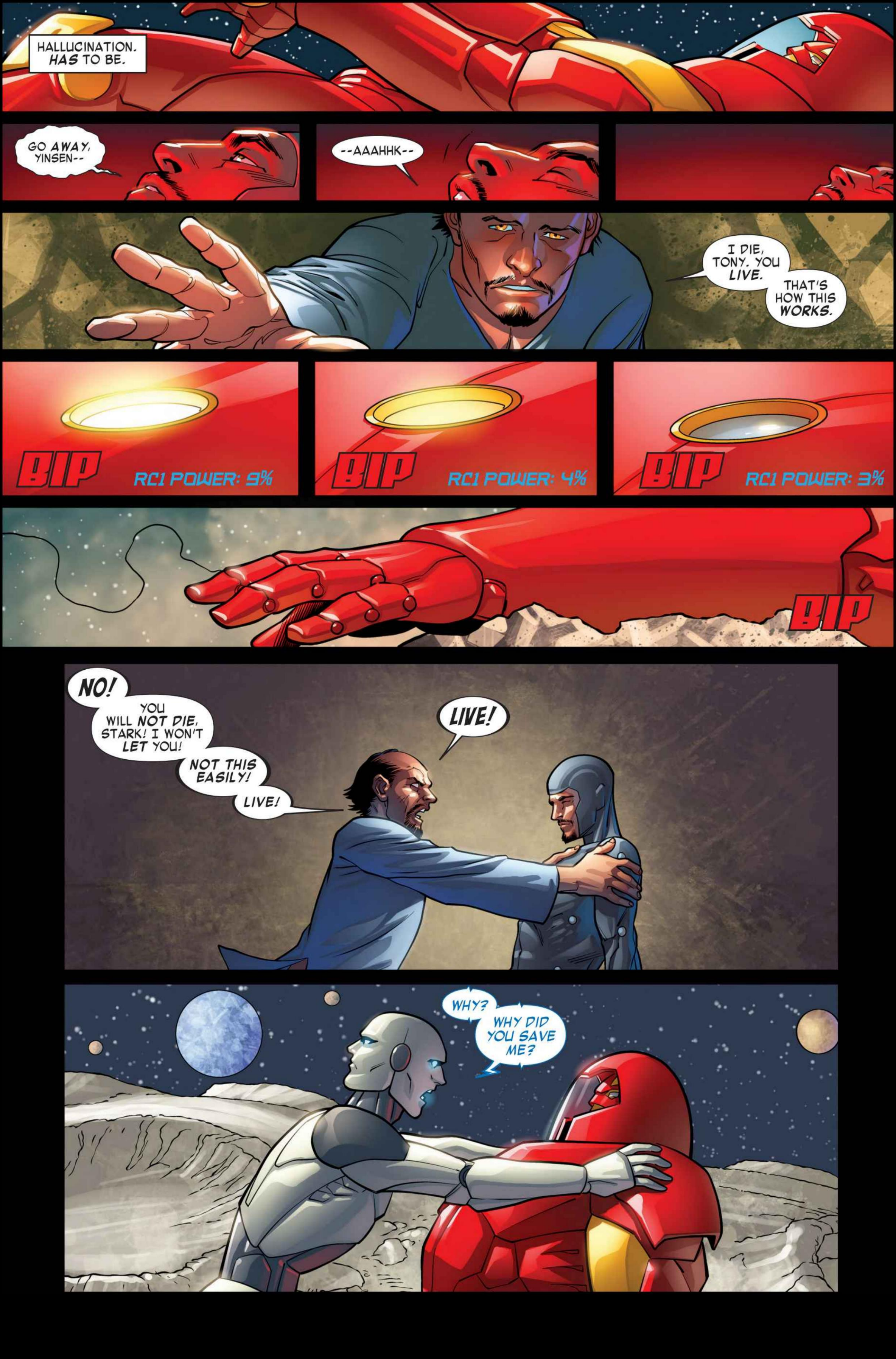

RC1 POWER: 89%
CORE ONE.
WASN'T MADE TO POWER *FORCE SHIELDS*.
OR CONTAIN *EXPLOSIONS*.
RC1 POWER: 76%
SO DO IT *ANYWAY*.
AND *HOPE*.
RC1 POWER: 62%
COME *ON*, STARK.
GET THAT *SHIELD* UP.
AAAAHHH--
--HHHHHHHHH!
YOU CAN *DO* THIS.

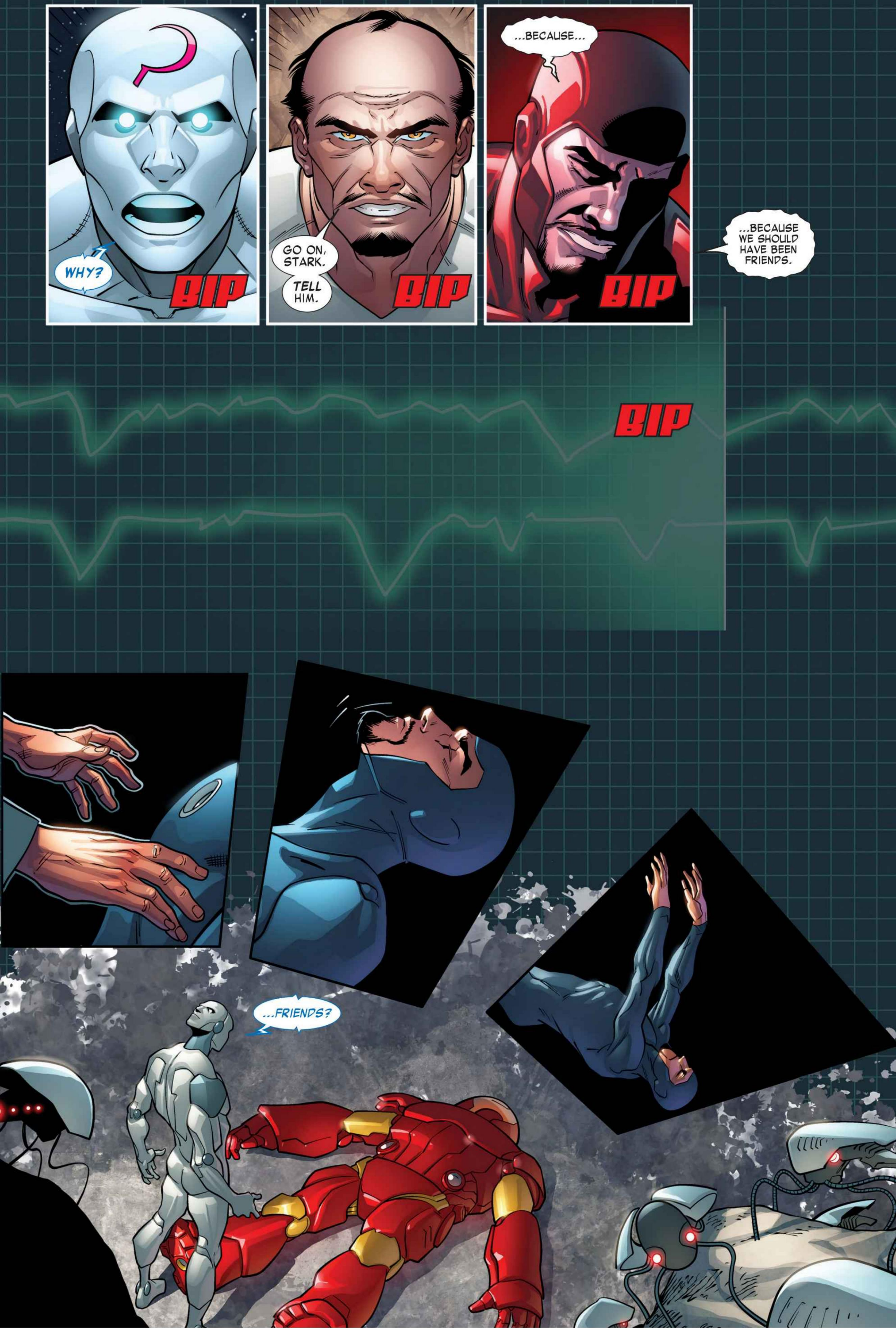

YOU
CAN
SAVE HIM

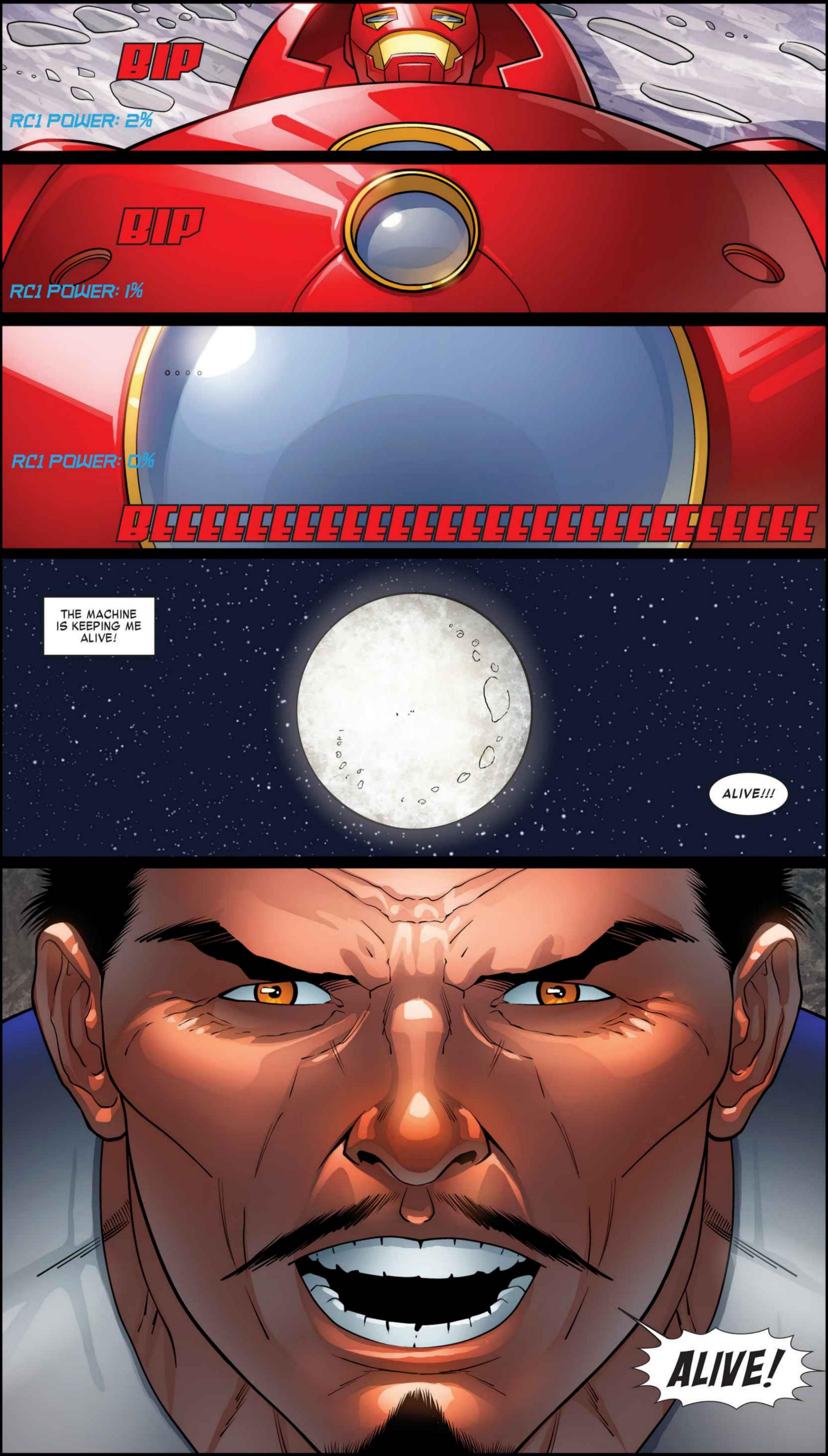

RC1 POWER: 10%
TIME PASSES.
WHEN I COME *TO*...THERE'S A *SOUND.*

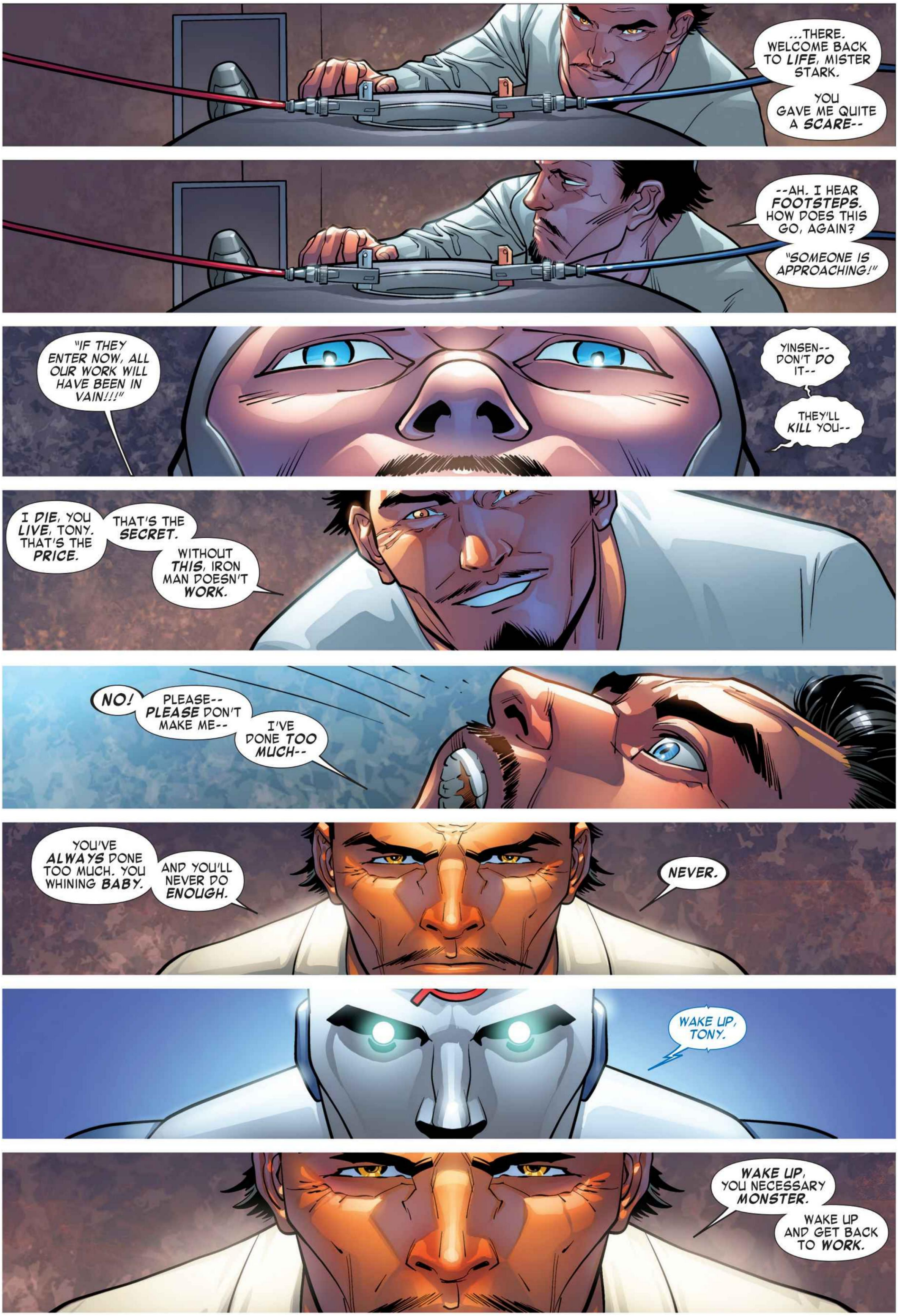

BIP
BIP
I *KNOW* THAT SOUND.
THAT'S THE CHEERY LITTLE WARNING BEEP *CORE ONE* MAKES JUST BEFORE IT *DIES.*
BIP
RC1 POWER: 9%
THAT ISN'T GOOD.

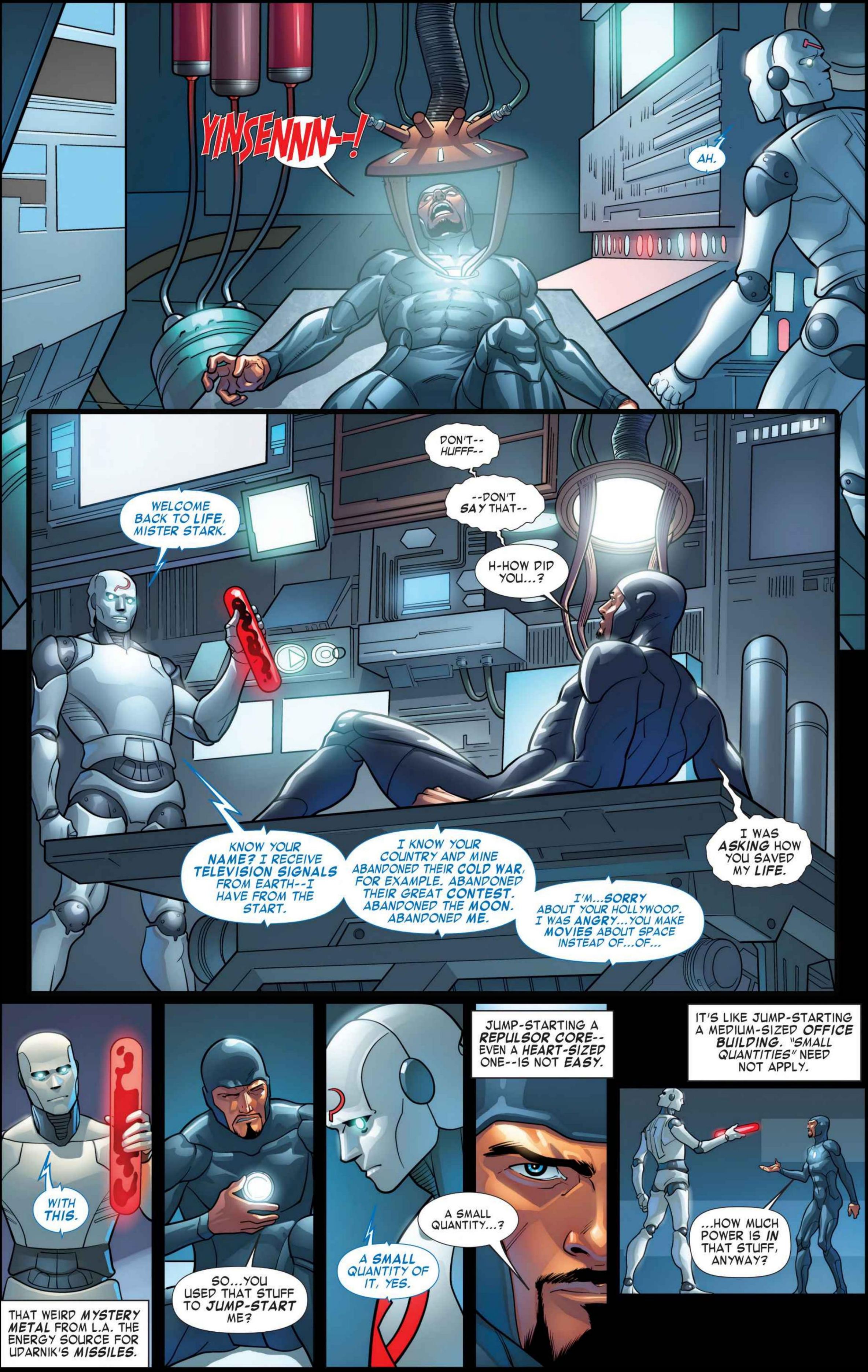

ALL THE POWER-HUNGRY SYSTEMS HAVE SHUT DOWN. WHICH MEANS I CAN'T *MOVE*.
AND I CAN'T QUITE... REMEMBER HOW TO *BREATHE*...
HHUCHH
HCCCHH
AMERICAN...
HHHUHH...
WHO...
WHY, TONY?
IT *CAN'T* BE...
YINSEN?
HO YINSEN IS DEAD.
HE WAS A MEDICAL FUTURIST-- A *PACIFIST*. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE MINE, BUYING TIME FOR MY VERY FIRST *SUIT* TO POWER UP SO WE COULD ESCAPE OUR CAPTORS.
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT HE'D THINK OF ME NOW.
WHY WOULD *YOU* SAVE *ME*?

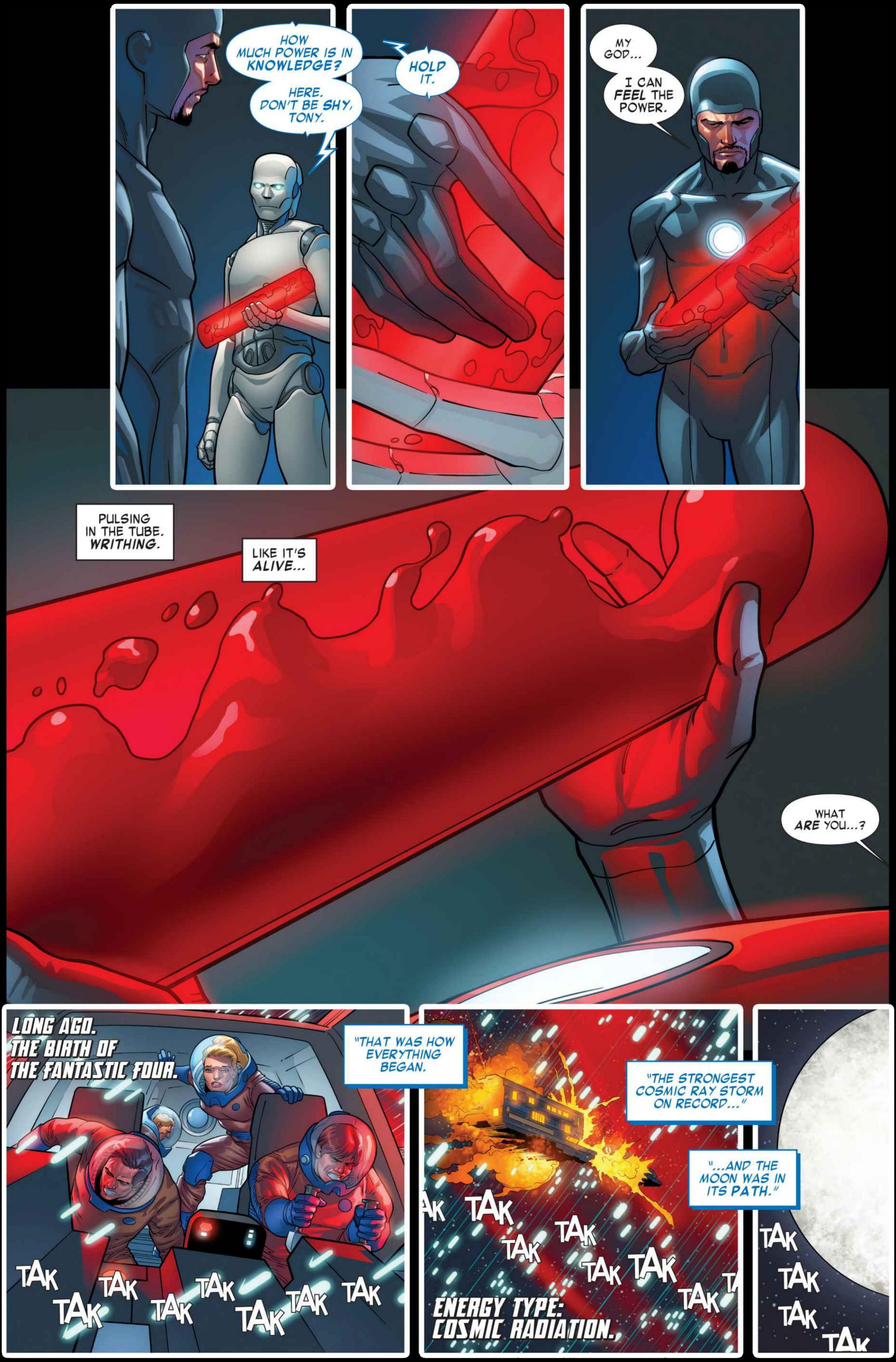

HALLUCINATION. HAS TO BE.
GO AWAY, YINSEN--
--AAAHHK--
I DIE, TONY. YOU LIVE.
THAT'S HOW THIS WORKS.
BIP
RC1 POWER: 9%
BIP
RC1 POWER: 4%
BIP
RC1 POWER: 3%
BIP
NO!
YOU WILL NOT DIE, STARK! I WON'T LET YOU!
NOT THIS EASILY!
LIVE!
LIVE!
WHY?
WHY DID YOU SAVE ME?

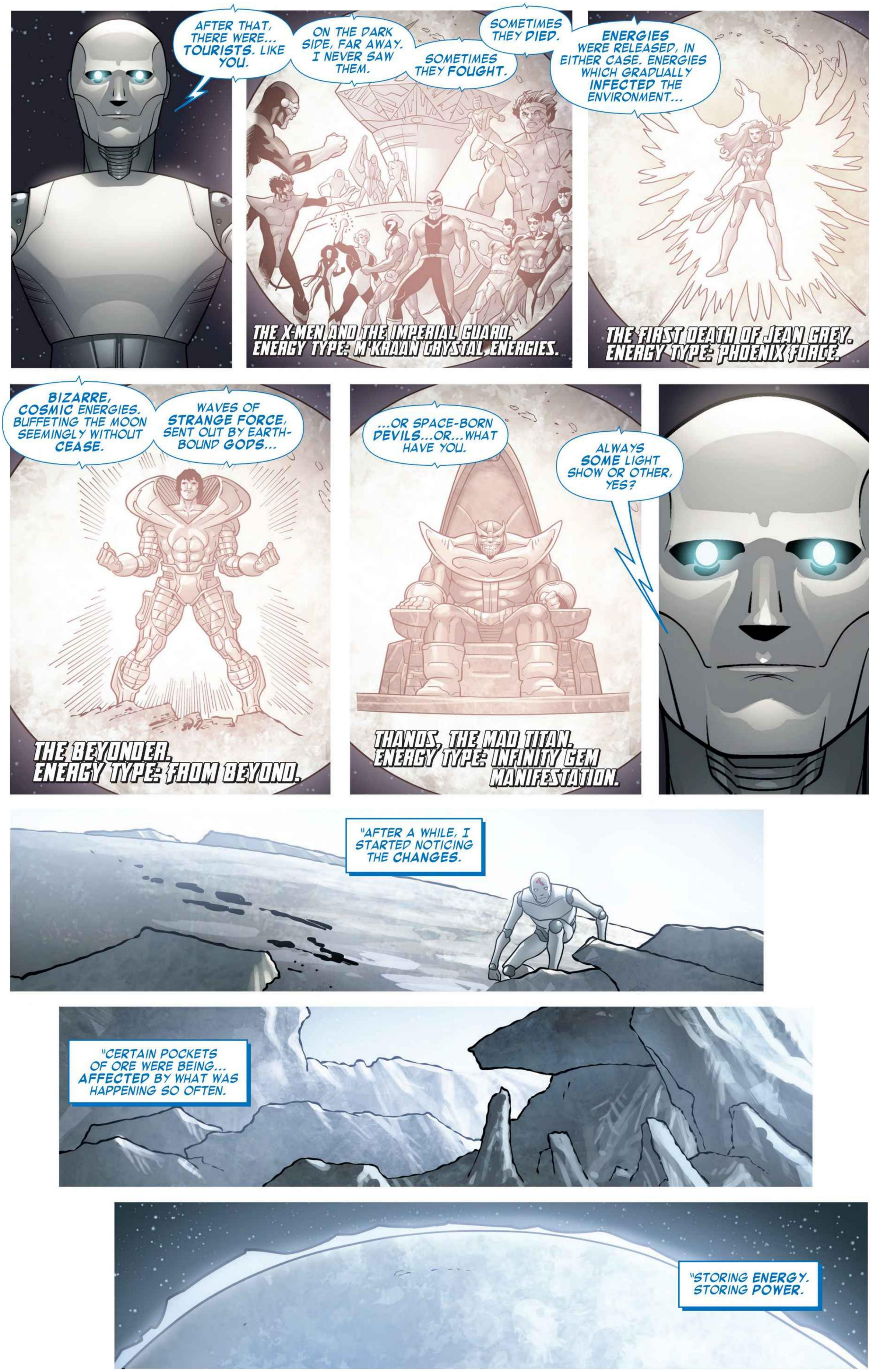

WHY?
BIP
GO ON, STARK.
TELL HIM.
BIP
...BECAUSE...
BIP
...BECAUSE WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FRIENDS.
BIP
...FRIENDS?

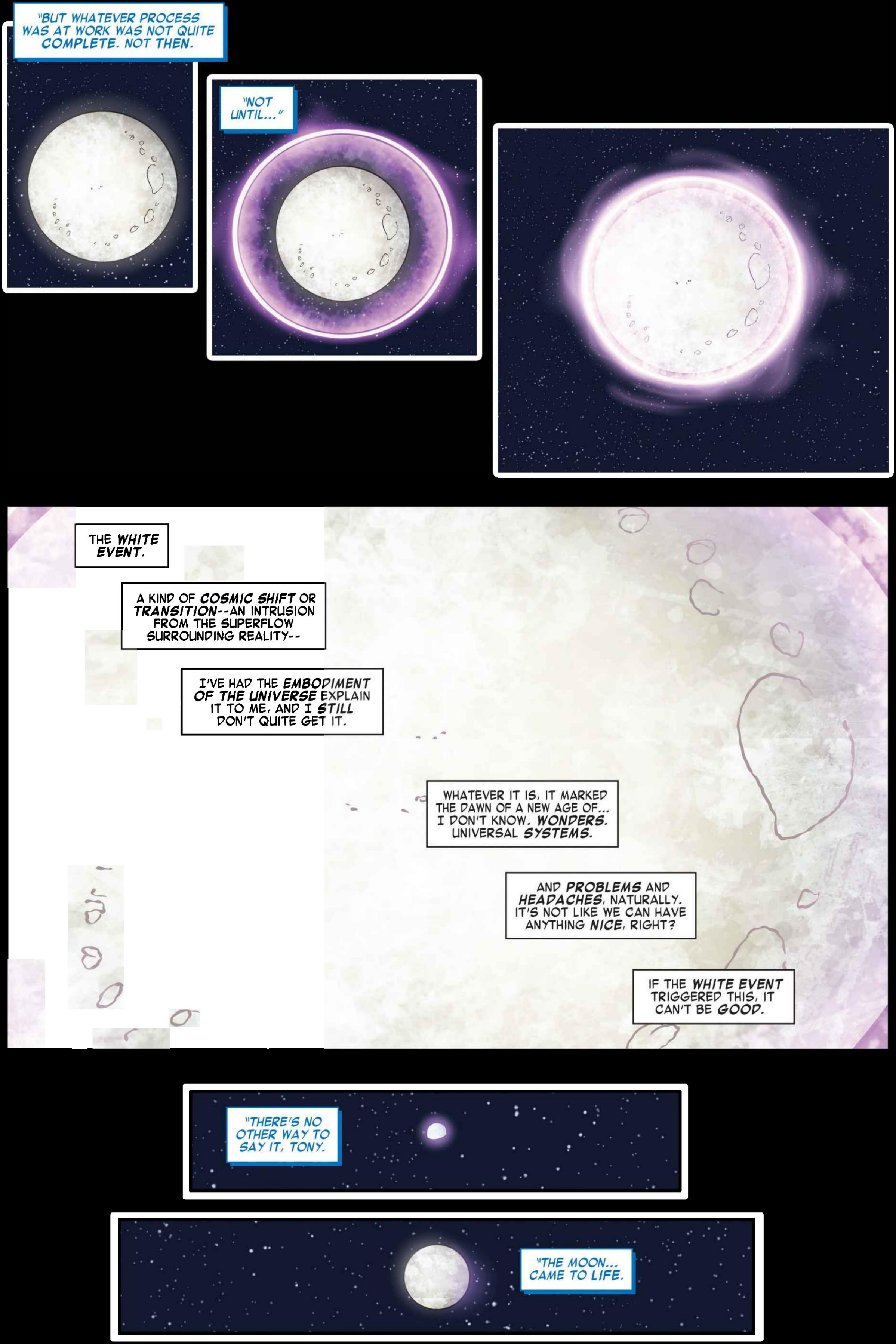

BIP
RC1 POWER: 2%
BIP
RC1 POWER: 1%
RC1 POWER: 0%
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
THE MACHINE IS KEEPING ME ALIVE!
ALIVE!!!
ALIVE!

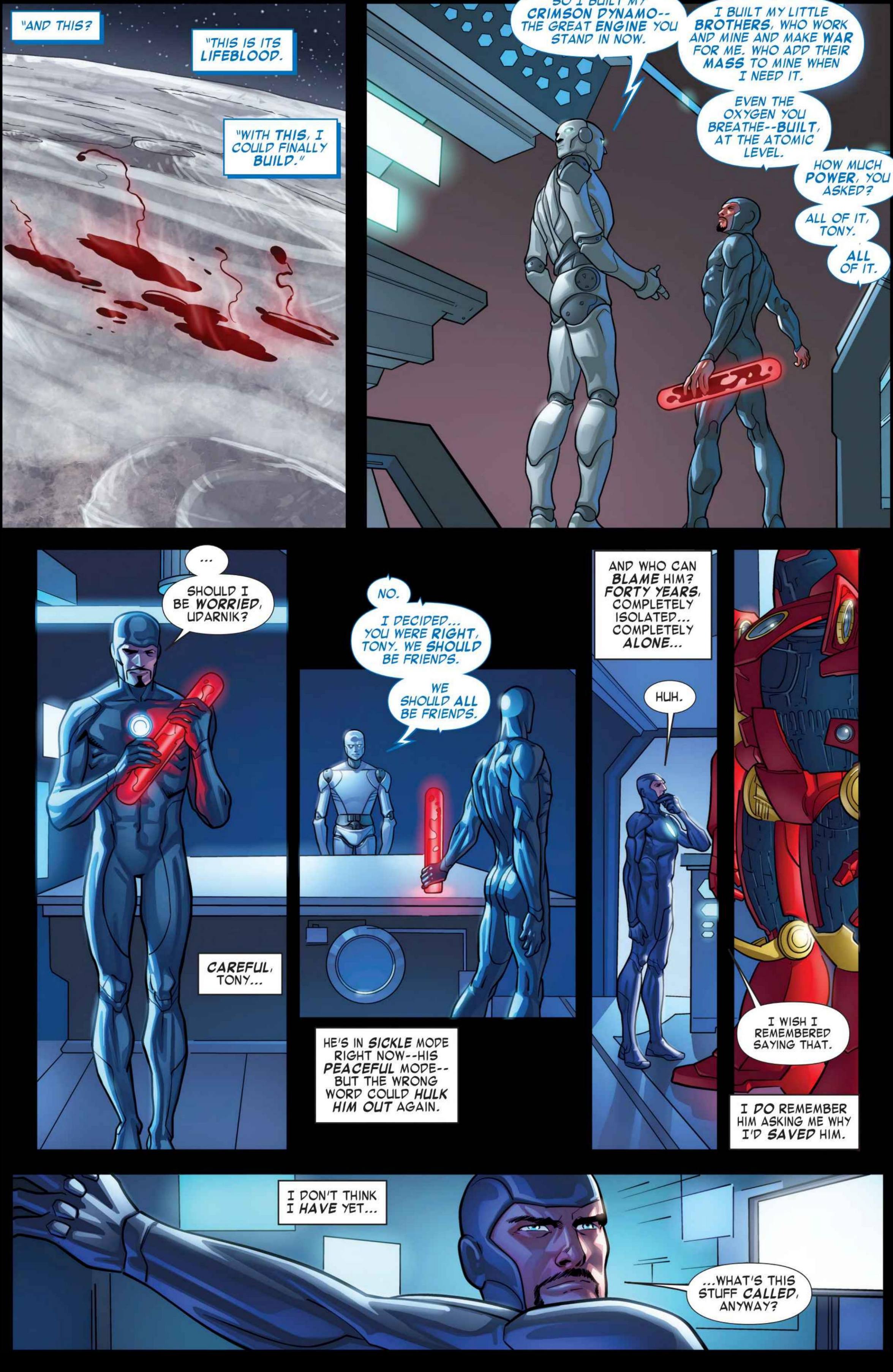

...THERE. WELCOME BACK TO *LIFE*, MISTER STARK.
YOU GAVE ME QUITE A *SCARE*--
--AH. I HEAR *FOOTSTEPS.* HOW DOES THIS GO, AGAIN?
"SOMEONE IS APPROACHING!"
"IF THEY ENTER NOW, ALL OUR WORK WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN!!!"
YINSEN-- DON'T *DO* IT--
THEY'LL *KILL* YOU--
I DIE, YOU *LIVE*, TONY. THAT'S THE *PRICE.*
THAT'S THE *SECRET*.
WITHOUT *THIS*, IRON MAN DOESN'T *WORK.*
NO!
PLEASE-- *PLEASE* DON'T MAKE ME--
I'VE DONE *TOO MUCH*--
YOU'VE *ALWAYS* DONE TOO MUCH. YOU WHINING *BABY*.
AND YOU'LL NEVER DO *ENOUGH.*
NEVER.
WAKE UP, TONY.
WAKE UP, YOU NECESSARY *MONSTER*.
WAKE UP AND GET BACK TO *WORK*.

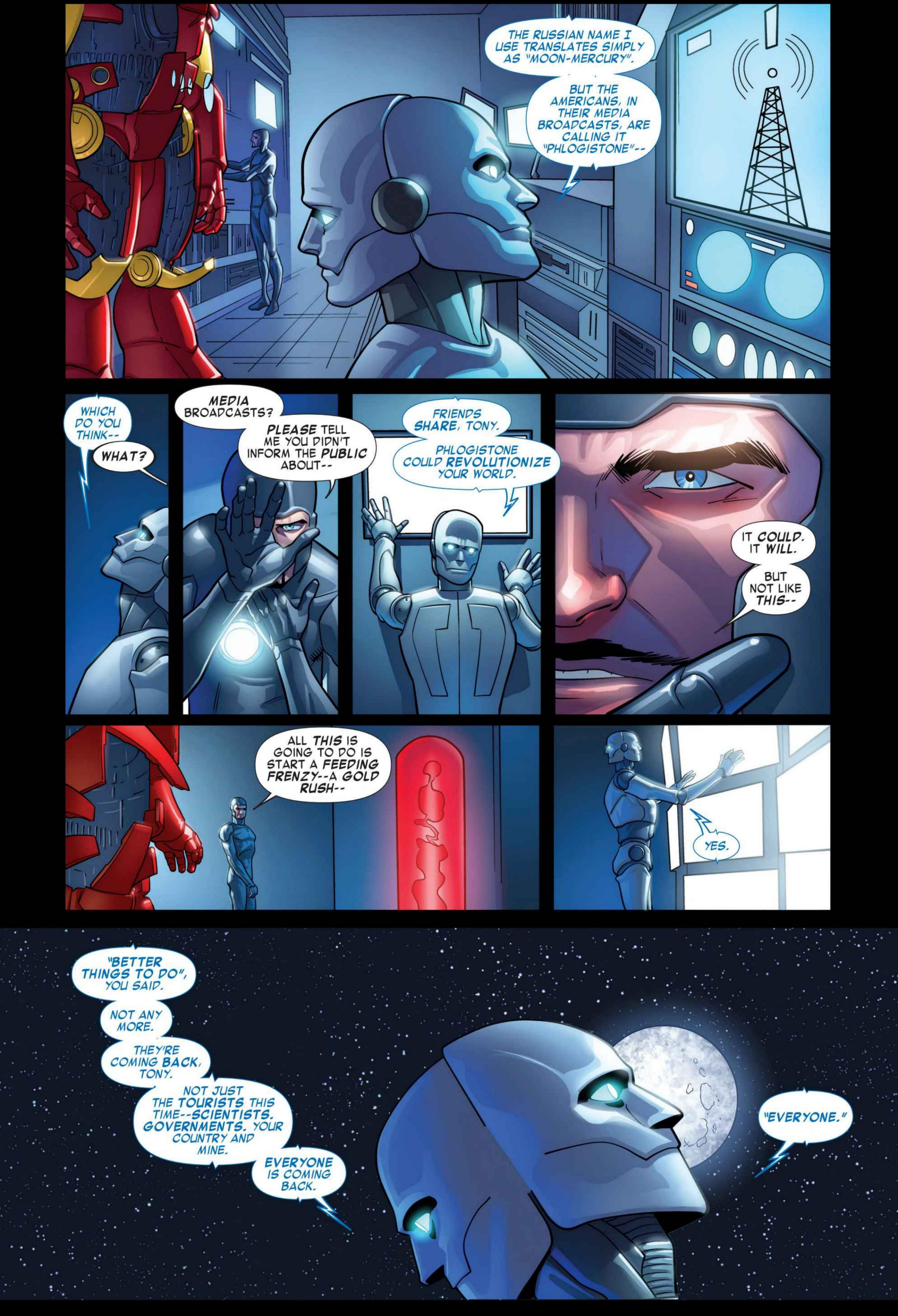

YINSENNN--!
AH.
WELCOME BACK TO LIFE, MISTER STARK.
DON'T-- HUFFF--
--DON'T SAY THAT--
H-HOW DID YOU...?
KNOW YOUR NAME? I RECEIVE TELEVISION SIGNALS FROM EARTH--I HAVE FROM THE START.
I KNOW YOUR COUNTRY AND MINE ABANDONED THEIR COLD WAR, FOR EXAMPLE. ABANDONED THEIR GREAT CONTEST. ABANDONED THE MOON. ABANDONED ME.
I'M...SORRY ABOUT YOUR HOLLYWOOD. I WAS ANGRY...YOU MAKE MOVIES ABOUT SPACE INSTEAD OF...OF...
I WAS ASKING HOW YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
WITH THIS.
THAT WEIRD MYSTERY METAL FROM L.A. THE ENERGY SOURCE FOR UDARNIK'S MISSILES.
SO...YOU USED THAT STUFF TO JUMP-START ME?
A SMALL QUANTITY OF IT, YES.
JUMP-STARTING A REPULSOR CORE--EVEN A HEART-SIZED ONE--IS NOT EASY.
A SMALL QUANTITY...?
IT'S LIKE JUMP-STARTING A MEDIUM-SIZED OFFICE BUILDING. "SMALL QUANTITIES" NEED NOT APPLY.
...HOW MUCH POWER IS IN THAT STUFF, ANYWAY?

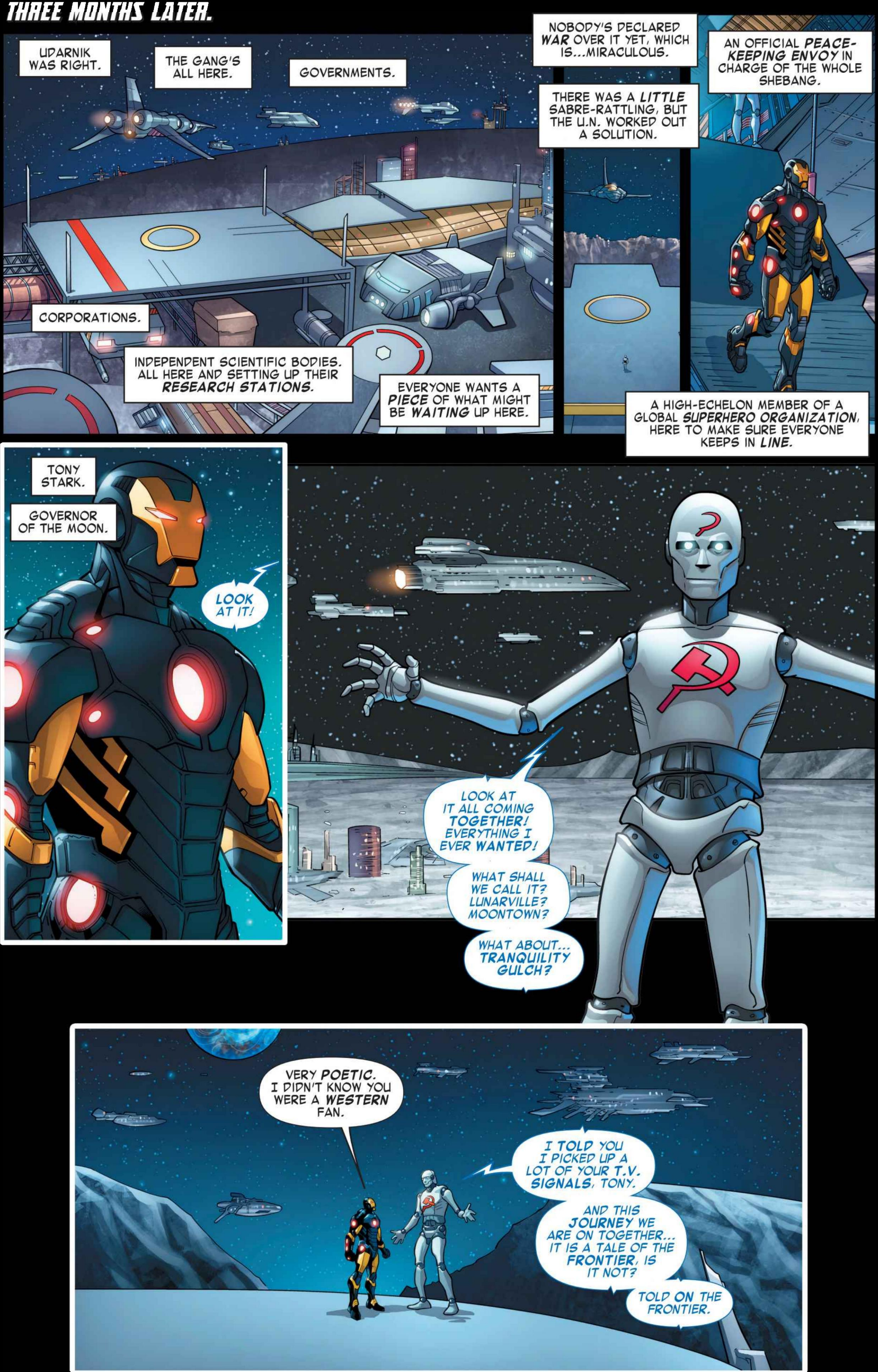

HOW MUCH POWER IS IN KNOWLEDGE?
HERE. DON'T BE SHY, TONY.
HOLD IT.
MY GOD...
I CAN FEEL THE POWER.
PULSING IN THE TUBE. WRITHING.
LIKE IT'S ALIVE...
WHAT ARE YOU...?
LONG AGO. THE BIRTH OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
"THAT WAS HOW EVERYTHING BEGAN.
TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK
"THE STRONGEST COSMIC RAY STORM ON RECORD..."
AK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TA
ENERGY TYPE: COSMIC RADIATION.
"...AND THE MOON WAS IN ITS PATH."
TAK TAK TAK TAK

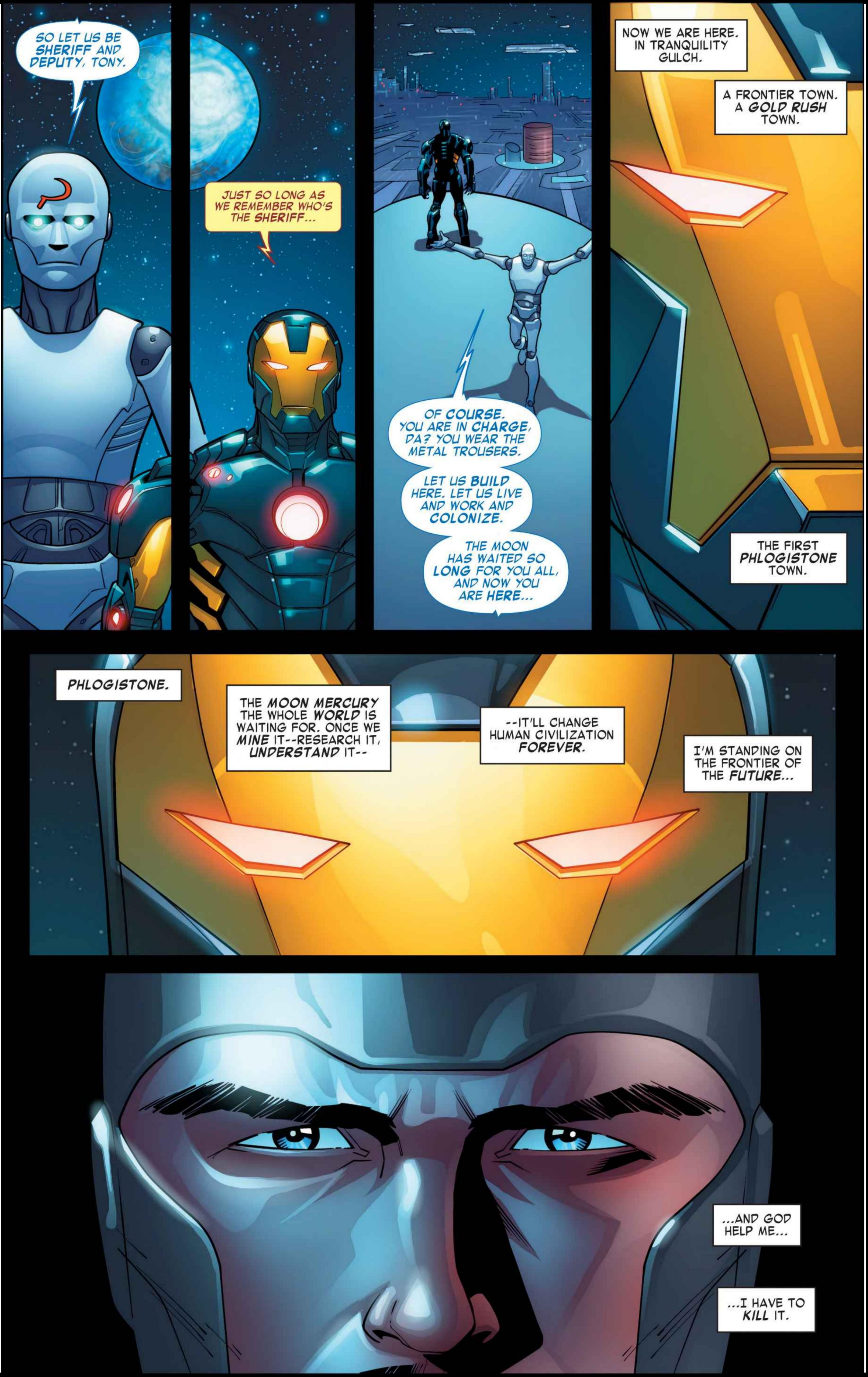

AFTER THAT, THERE WERE... TOURISTS. LIKE YOU.
ON THE DARK SIDE, FAR AWAY. I NEVER SAW THEM.
SOMETIMES THEY FOUGHT.
SOMETIMES THEY DIED.
THE X-MEN AND THE IMPERIAL GUARD. ENERGY TYPE: M'KRAAN CRYSTAL ENERGIES.
ENERGIES WERE RELEASED, IN EITHER CASE. ENERGIES WHICH GRADUALLY INFECTED THE ENVIRONMENT...
THE FIRST DEATH OF JEAN GREY. ENERGY TYPE: PHOENIX FORCE.
BIZARRE, COSMIC ENERGIES. BUFFETING THE MOON SEEMINGLY WITHOUT CEASE.
WAVES OF STRANGE FORCE, SENT OUT BY EARTH-BOUND GODS...
THE BEYONDER. ENERGY TYPE: FROM BEYOND.
...OR SPACE-BORN DEVILS...OR...WHAT HAVE YOU.
THANOS, THE MAD TITAN. ENERGY TYPE: INFINITY GEM MANIFESTATION.
ALWAYS SOME LIGHT SHOW OR OTHER, YES?
"AFTER A WHILE, I STARTED NOTICING THE CHANGES.
"CERTAIN POCKETS OF ORE WERE BEING... AFFECTED BY WHAT WAS HAPPENING SO OFTEN.
"STORING ENERGY. STORING POWER.

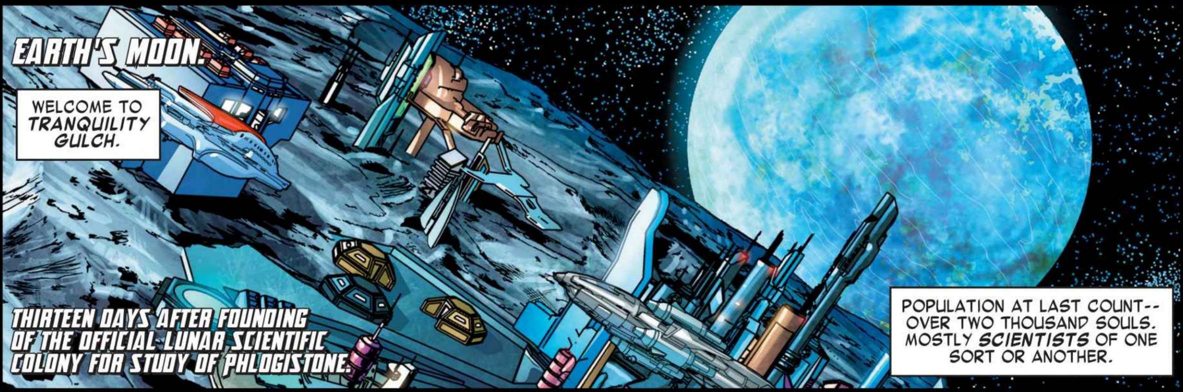

"BUT WHATEVER PROCESS WAS AT WORK WAS NOT QUITE COMPLETE. NOT THEN.
"NOT UNTIL..."
THE WHITE EVENT.
A KIND OF COSMIC SHIFT OR TRANSITION--AN INTRUSION FROM THE SUPERFLOW SURROUNDING REALITY--
I'VE HAD THE EMBODIMENT OF THE UNIVERSE EXPLAIN IT TO ME, AND I STILL DON'T QUITE GET IT.
WHATEVER IT IS, IT MARKED THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE OF... I DON'T KNOW. WONDERS. UNIVERSAL SYSTEMS.
AND PROBLEMS AND HEADACHES, NATURALLY. IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN HAVE ANYTHING NICE, RIGHT?
IF THE WHITE EVENT TRIGGERED THIS, IT CAN'T BE GOOD.
"THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO SAY IT, TONY.
"THE MOON... CAME TO LIFE.

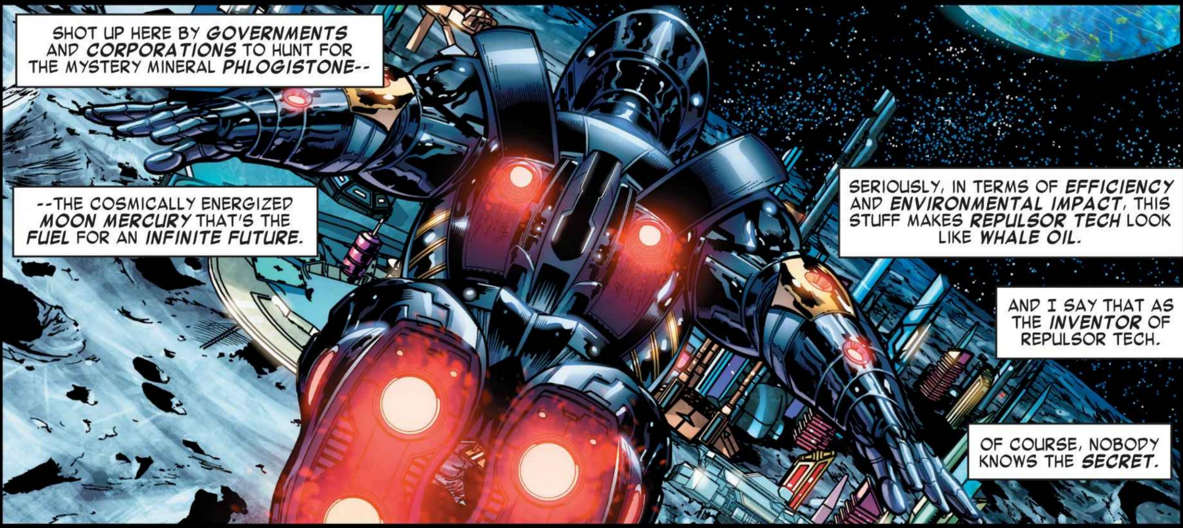

"AND THIS?
"THIS IS ITS **LIFEBLOOD.**
"WITH **THIS,** I COULD FINALLY **BUILD.**"
SO I BUILT MY **CRIMSON DYNAMO**-- THE GREAT **ENGINE** YOU STAND IN NOW.
I BUILT MY LITTLE **BROTHERS,** WHO WORK AND MINE AND MAKE **WAR** FOR ME. WHO ADD THEIR **MASS** TO MINE WHEN I NEED IT.
EVEN THE OXYGEN YOU BREATHE--**BUILT,** AT THE ATOMIC LEVEL.
HOW MUCH **POWER,** YOU ASKED?
ALL OF IT, TONY.
ALL OF IT.
...
SHOULD I BE **WORRIED,** UDARNIK?
CAREFUL, TONY...
NO.
I DECIDED... YOU WERE **RIGHT,** TONY. WE **SHOULD** BE FRIENDS.
WE SHOULD **ALL** BE FRIENDS.
HE'S IN **SICKLE** MODE RIGHT NOW--HIS **PEACEFUL** MODE-- BUT THE WRONG WORD COULD **HULK HIM OUT** AGAIN.
AND WHO CAN **BLAME** HIM? **FORTY YEARS,** COMPLETELY ISOLATED... COMPLETELY **ALONE...**
HUH.
I WISH I REMEMBERED SAYING THAT.
I **DO** REMEMBER HIM ASKING ME WHY I'D **SAVED** HIM.
I DON'T THINK I **HAVE** YET...
...WHAT'S THIS STUFF **CALLED,** ANYWAY?

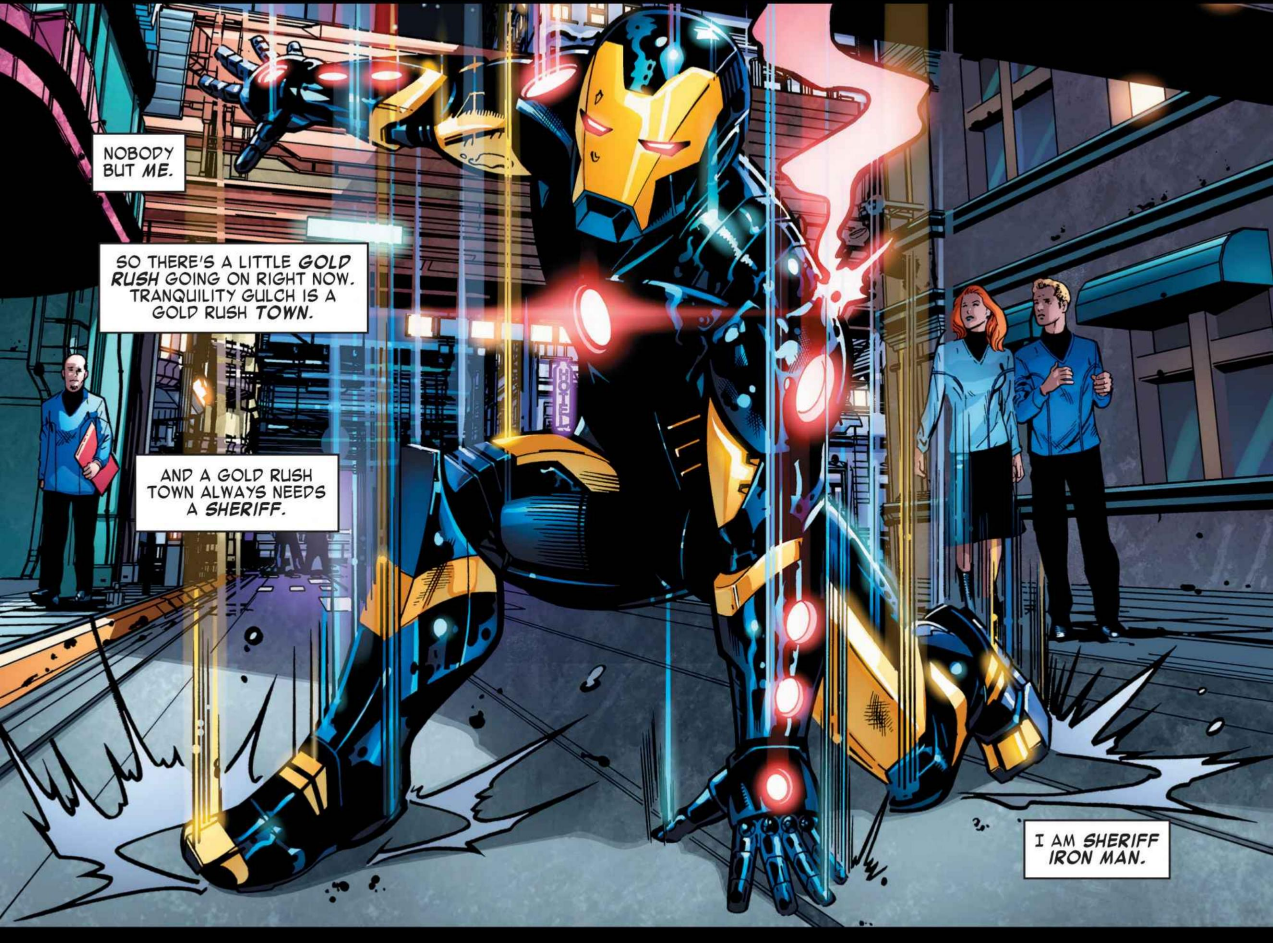

THE RUSSIAN NAME I USE TRANSLATES SIMPLY AS "MOON-MERCURY".
BUT THE AMERICANS, IN THEIR MEDIA BROADCASTS, ARE CALLING IT "PHLOGISTONE"--
WHICH DO YOU THINK--
WHAT?
MEDIA BROADCASTS?
PLEASE TELL ME YOU DIDN'T INFORM THE PUBLIC ABOUT--
FRIENDS SHARE, TONY.
PHLOGISTONE COULD REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR WORLD.
IT COULD. IT WILL.
BUT NOT LIKE THIS--
ALL THIS IS GOING TO DO IS START A FEEDING FRENZY--A GOLD RUSH--
YES.
"BETTER THINGS TO DO", YOU SAID.
NOT ANY MORE.
THEY'RE COMING BACK, TONY.
NOT JUST THE TOURISTS THIS TIME--SCIENTISTS. GOVERNMENTS. YOUR COUNTRY AND MINE.
EVERYONE IS COMING BACK.
"EVERYONE."

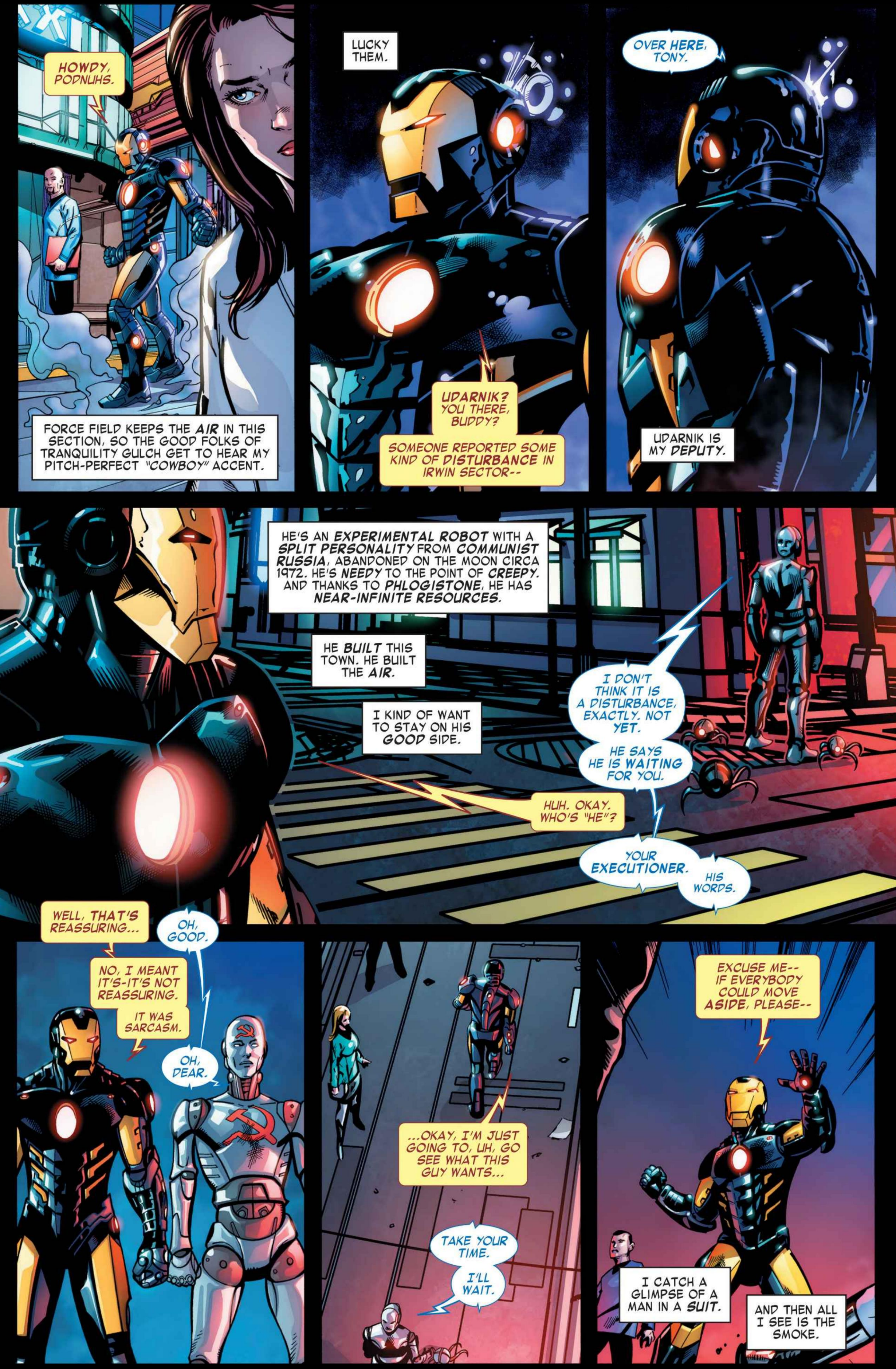

THREE MONTHS LATER.
UDARNIK WAS RIGHT.
THE GANG'S ALL HERE.
GOVERNMENTS.
CORPORATIONS.
INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC BODIES. ALL HERE AND SETTING UP THEIR RESEARCH STATIONS.
EVERYONE WANTS A PIECE OF WHAT MIGHT BE WAITING UP HERE.
NOBODY'S DECLARED WAR OVER IT YET, WHICH IS...MIRACULOUS.
THERE WAS A LITTLE SABRE-RATTLING, BUT THE U.N. WORKED OUT A SOLUTION.
AN OFFICIAL PEACE-KEEPING ENVOY IN CHARGE OF THE WHOLE SHEBANG.
A HIGH-ECHELON MEMBER OF A GLOBAL SUPERHERO ORGANIZATION, HERE TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE KEEPS IN LINE.
TONY STARK.
GOVERNOR OF THE MOON.
LOOK AT IT!
LOOK AT IT ALL COMING TOGETHER! EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED!
WHAT SHALL WE CALL IT? LUNARVILLE? MOONTOWN?
WHAT ABOUT... TRANQUILITY GULCH?
VERY POETIC. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A WESTERN FAN.
I TOLD YOU I PICKED UP A LOT OF YOUR T.V. SIGNALS, TONY.
AND THIS JOURNEY WE ARE ON TOGETHER... IT IS A TALE OF THE FRONTIER, IS IT NOT?
TOLD ON THE FRONTIER.

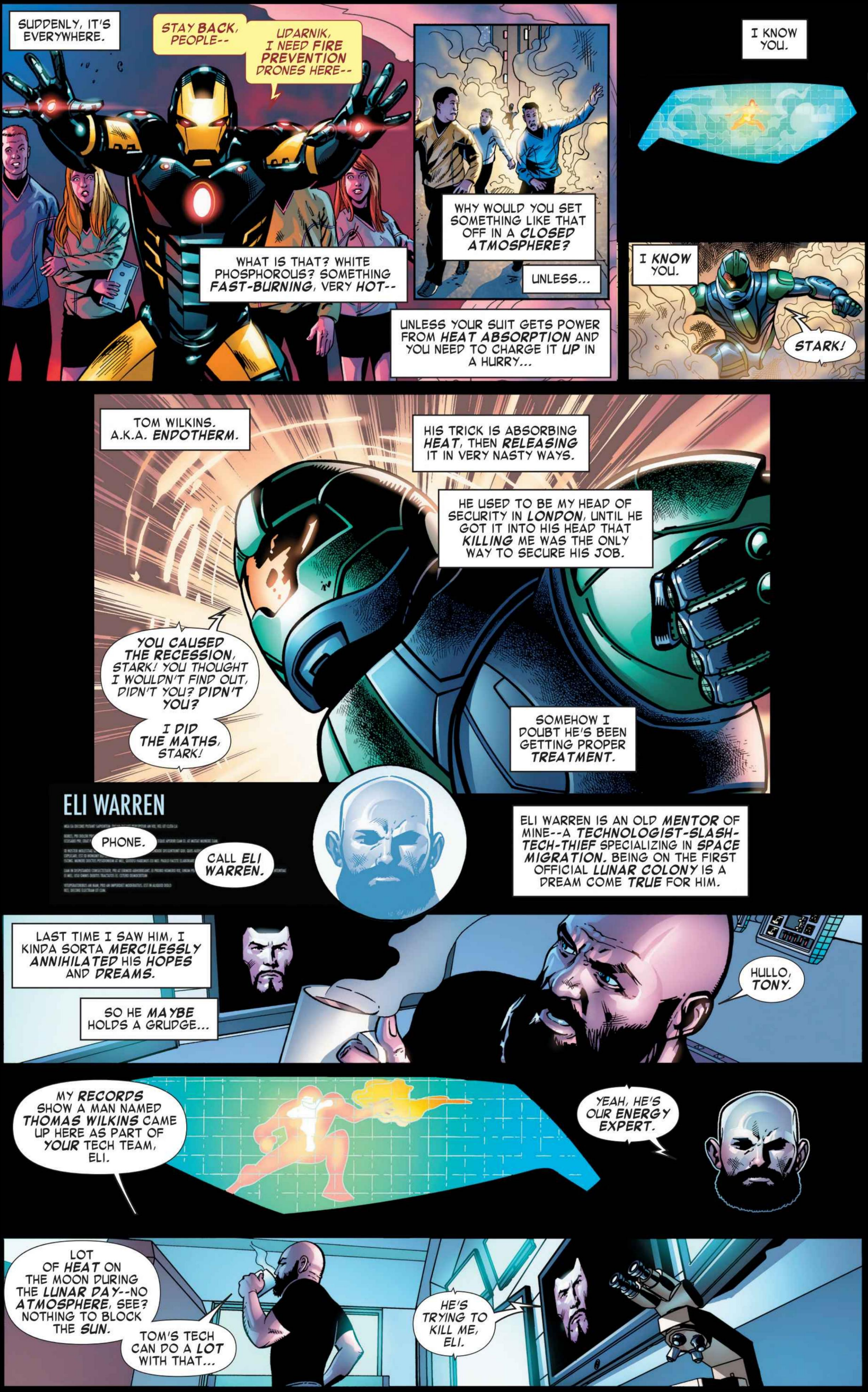

SO LET US BE SHERIFF AND DEPUTY, TONY.
JUST SO LONG AS WE REMEMBER WHO'S THE SHERIFF...
OF COURSE. YOU ARE IN CHARGE, DA? YOU WEAR THE METAL TROUSERS.
LET US BUILD HERE. LET US LIVE AND WORK AND COLONIZE.
THE MOON HAS WAITED SO LONG FOR YOU ALL, AND NOW YOU ARE HERE...
NOW WE ARE HERE. IN TRANQUILITY GULCH.
A FRONTIER TOWN. A GOLD RUSH TOWN.
THE FIRST PHLOGISTONE TOWN.
PHLOGISTONE.
THE MOON MERCURY THE WHOLE WORLD IS WAITING FOR. ONCE WE MINE IT--RESEARCH IT, UNDERSTAND IT--
--IT'LL CHANGE HUMAN CIVILIZATION FOREVER.
I'M STANDING ON THE FRONTIER OF THE FUTURE...
...AND GOD HELP ME...
...I HAVE TO KILL IT.

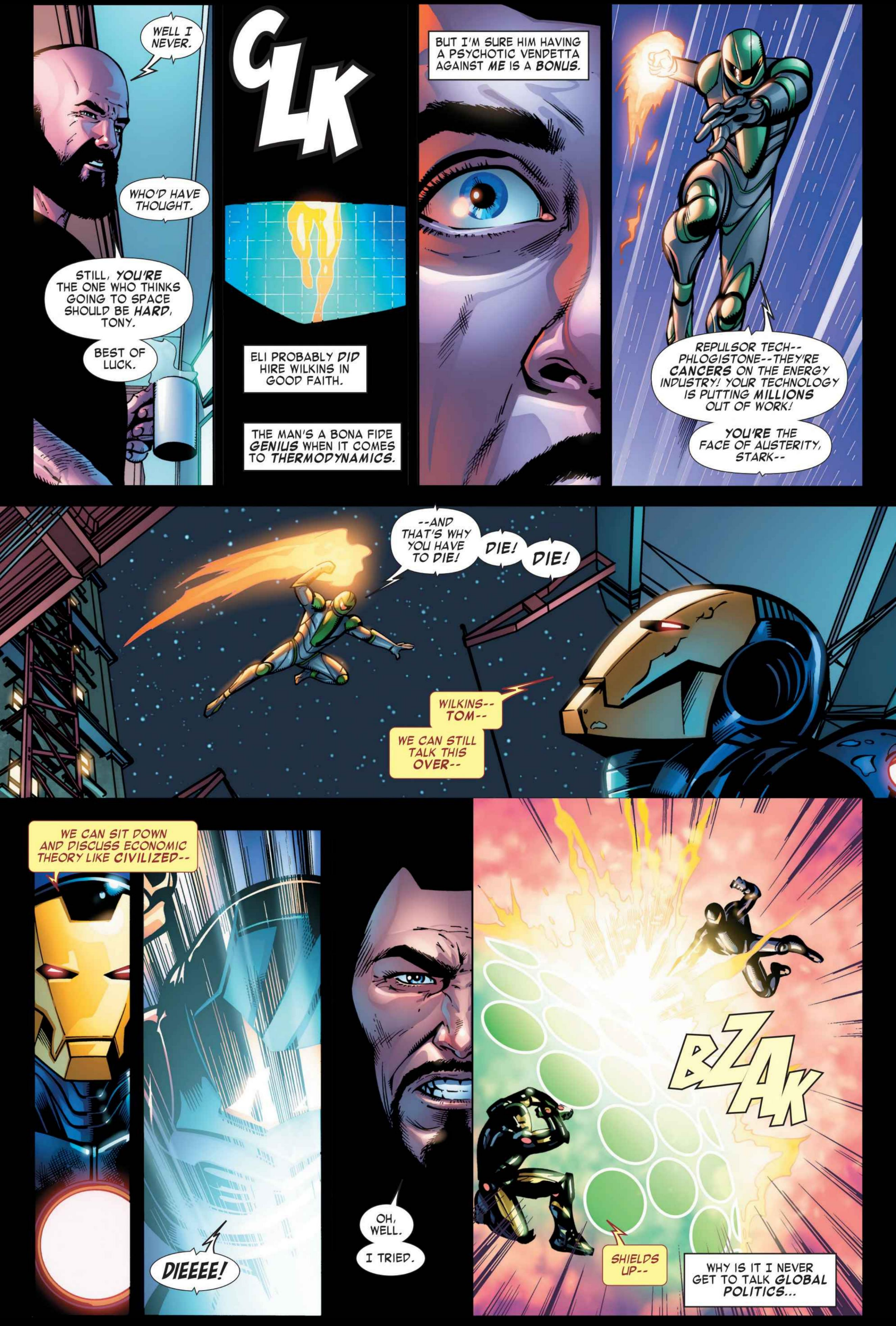

EARTH'S MOON.
WELCOME TO *TRANQUILITY GULCH.*
THIRTEEN DAYS AFTER FOUNDING OF THE OFFICIAL LUNAR SCIENTIFIC COLONY FOR STUDY OF PHLOGISTONE.
POPULATION AT LAST COUNT-- OVER TWO THOUSAND SOULS. MOSTLY *SCIENTISTS* OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER.

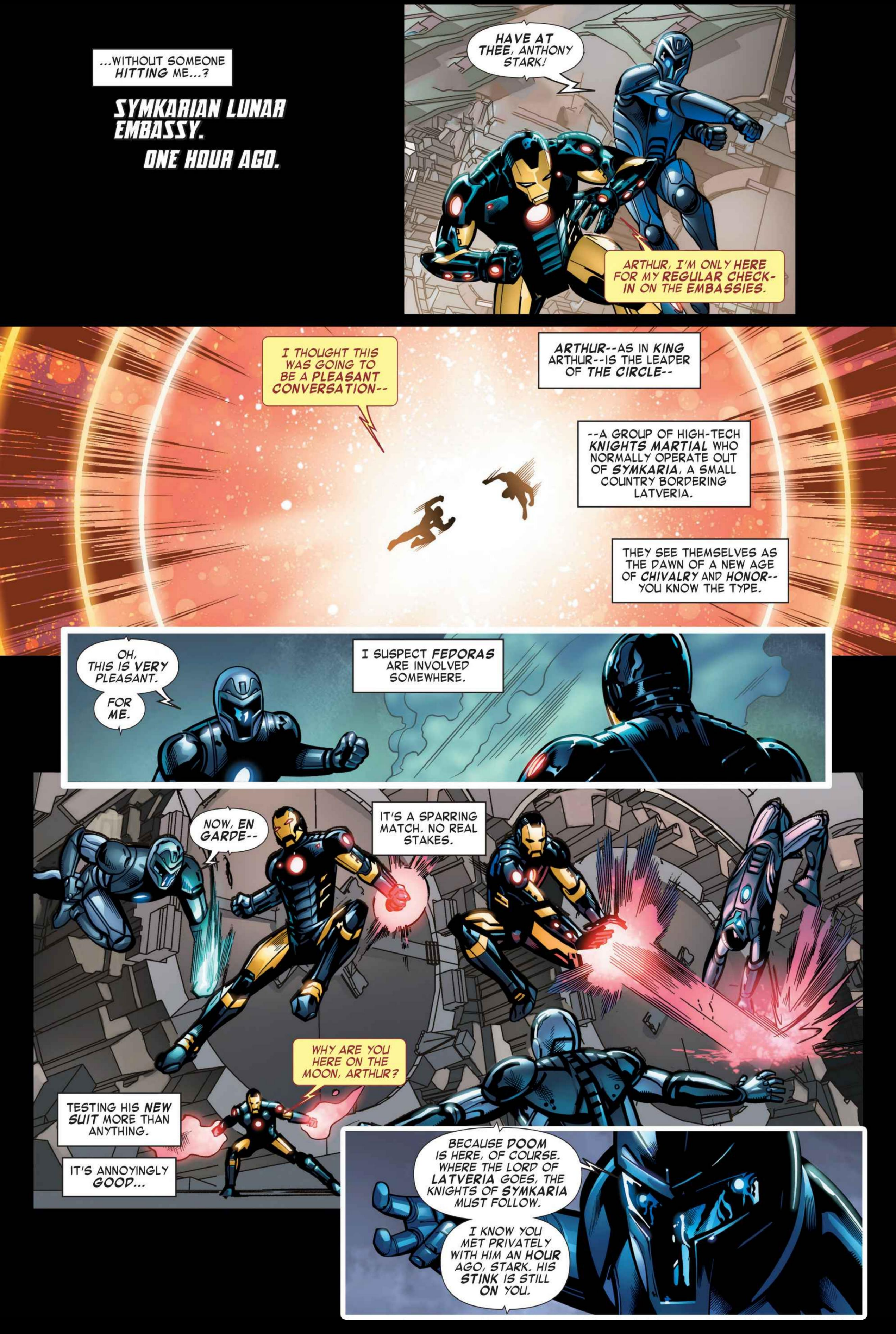

SHOT UP HERE BY *GOVERNMENTS* AND *CORPORATIONS* TO HUNT FOR THE MYSTERY MINERAL *PHLOGISTONE*--
--THE COSMICALLY ENERGIZED *MOON MERCURY* THAT'S THE *FUEL* FOR AN *INFINITE FUTURE.*
SERIOUSLY, IN TERMS OF *EFFICIENCY* AND *ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT*, THIS STUFF MAKES *REPULSOR TECH* LOOK LIKE *WHALE OIL.*
AND I SAY THAT AS THE *INVENTOR* OF REPULSOR TECH.
OF COURSE, NOBODY KNOWS THE *SECRET.*

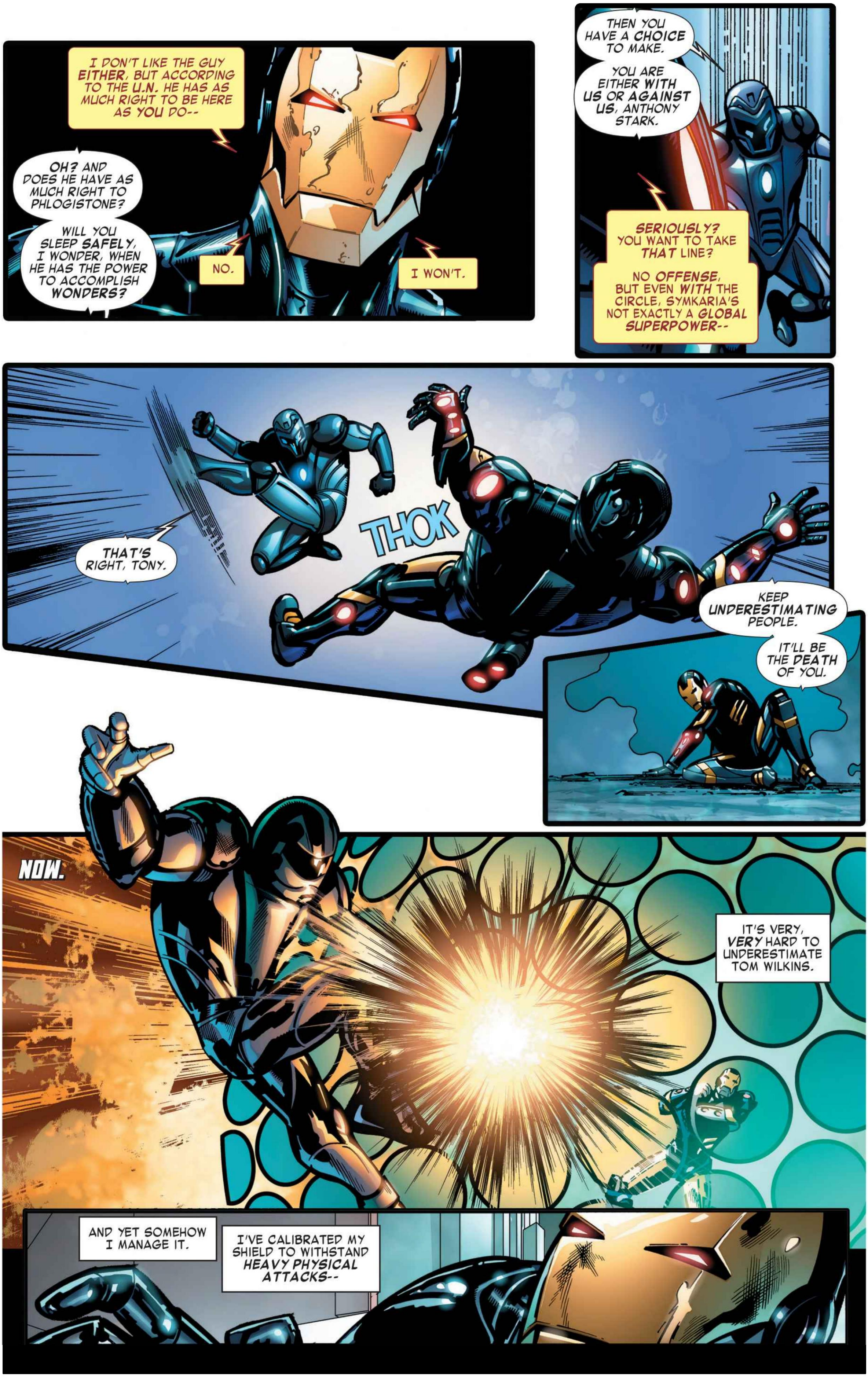

NOBODY BUT *ME.*
SO THERE'S A LITTLE *GOLD RUSH* GOING ON RIGHT NOW. TRANQUILITY GULCH IS A GOLD RUSH *TOWN.*
AND A GOLD RUSH TOWN ALWAYS NEEDS A *SHERIFF.*
I AM *SHERIFF IRON MAN.*

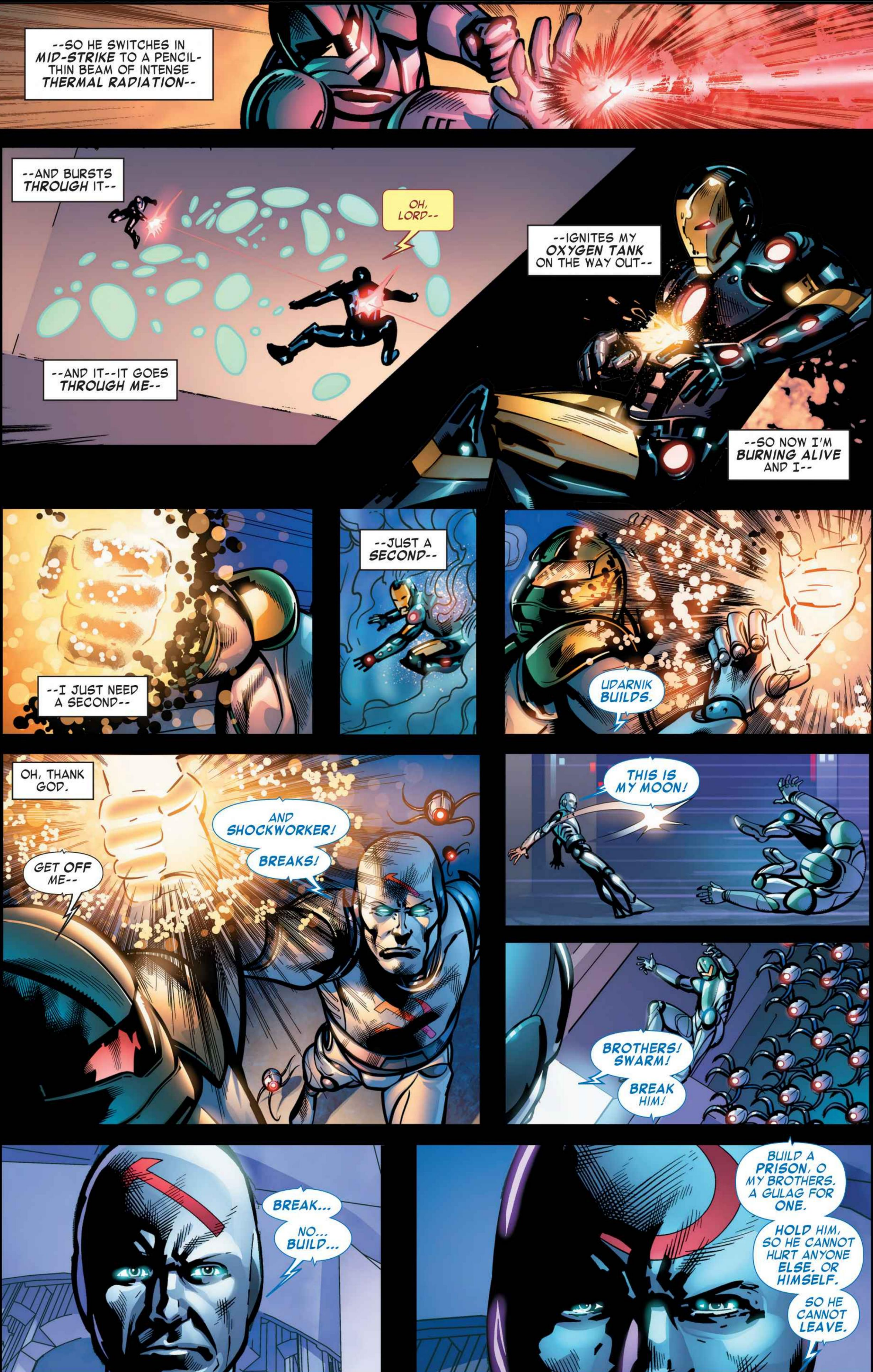

HOWDY, PODNUHS.
FORCE FIELD KEEPS THE AIR IN THIS SECTION, SO THE GOOD FOLKS OF TRANQUILITY GULCH GET TO HEAR MY PITCH-PERFECT "COWBOY" ACCENT.
LUCKY THEM.
UDARNIK? YOU THERE, BUDDY?
SOMEONE REPORTED SOME KIND OF DISTURBANCE IN IRWIN SECTOR--
OVER HERE, TONY.
UDARNIK IS MY DEPUTY.
HE'S AN EXPERIMENTAL ROBOT WITH A SPLIT PERSONALITY FROM COMMUNIST RUSSIA, ABANDONED ON THE MOON CIRCA 1972. HE'S NEEDY TO THE POINT OF CREEPY. AND THANKS TO PHLOGISTONE, HE HAS NEAR-INFINITE RESOURCES.
HE BUILT THIS TOWN. HE BUILT THE AIR.
I KIND OF WANT TO STAY ON HIS GOOD SIDE.
I DON'T THINK IT IS A DISTURBANCE, EXACTLY. NOT YET.
HE SAYS HE IS WAITING FOR YOU.
HUH. OKAY. WHO'S "HE"?
YOUR EXECUTIONER.
HIS WORDS.
WELL, THAT'S REASSURING...
OH, GOOD.
NO, I MEANT IT'S-IT'S NOT REASSURING.
IT WAS SARCASM.
OH, DEAR.
...OKAY, I'M JUST GOING TO, UH, GO SEE WHAT THIS GUY WANTS...
TAKE YOUR TIME.
I'LL WAIT.
EXCUSE ME-- IF EVERYBODY COULD MOVE ASIDE, PLEASE--
I CATCH A GLIMPSE OF A MAN IN A SUIT.
AND THEN ALL I SEE IS THE SMOKE.

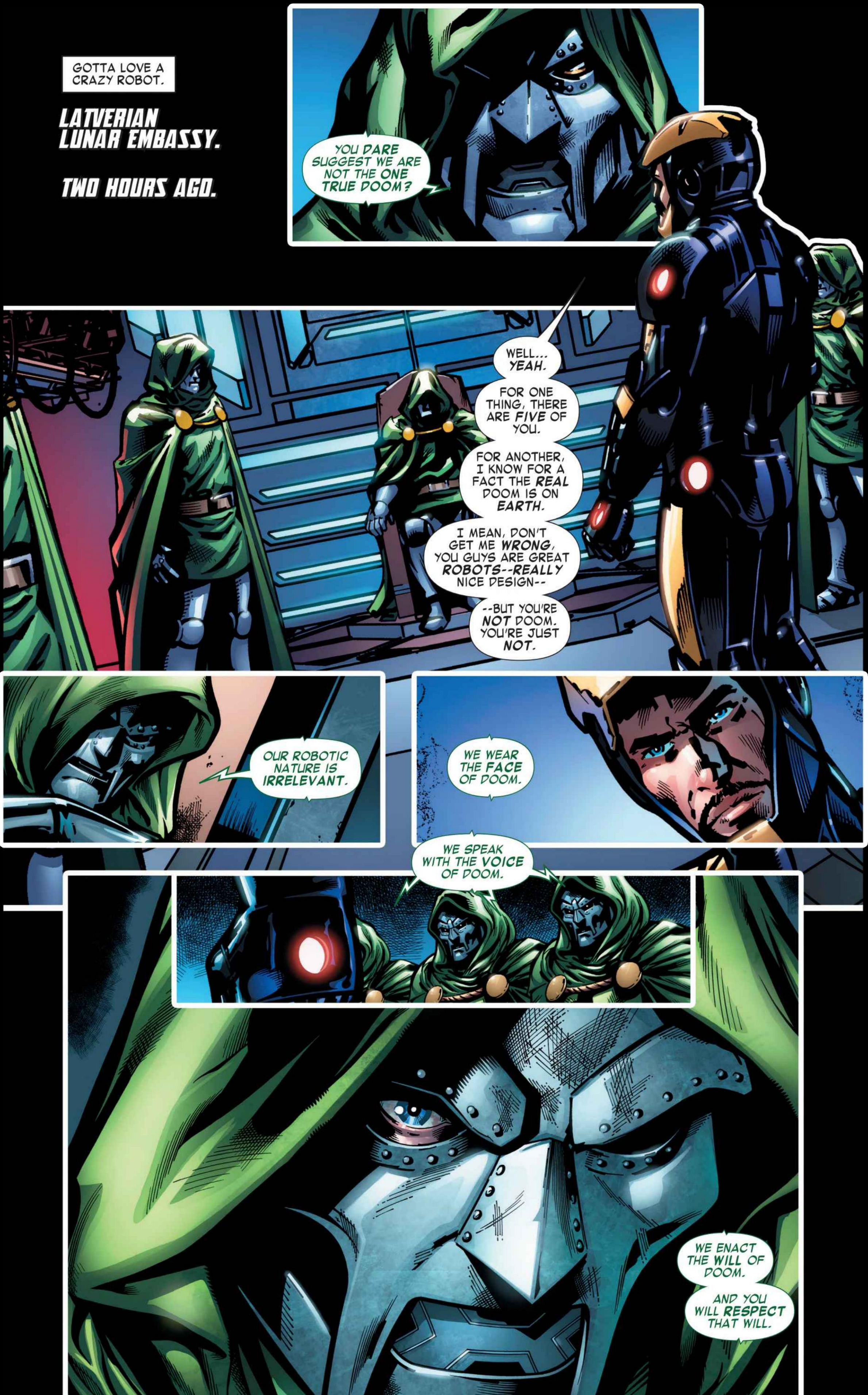

SUDDENLY, IT'S EVERYWHERE.
STAY **BACK**, PEOPLE--
UDARNIK, I NEED **FIRE PREVENTION** DRONES HERE--
WHAT IS THAT? WHITE PHOSPHOROUS? SOMETHING **FAST-BURNING**, VERY **HOT**--
WHY WOULD YOU SET SOMETHING LIKE THAT OFF IN A **CLOSED ATMOSPHERE?**
UNLESS...
UNLESS YOUR SUIT GETS POWER FROM **HEAT ABSORPTION** AND YOU NEED TO CHARGE IT **UP** IN A HURRY...
I KNOW YOU.
I **KNOW** YOU.
STARK!
TOM WILKINS. A.K.A. **ENDOTHERM.**
HIS TRICK IS ABSORBING **HEAT**, THEN **RELEASING** IT IN VERY NASTY WAYS.
HE USED TO BE MY HEAD OF SECURITY IN **LONDON**, UNTIL HE GOT IT INTO HIS HEAD THAT **KILLING** ME WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SECURE HIS JOB.
YOU CAUSED THE RECESSION, STARK! YOU THOUGHT I WOULDN'T FIND OUT, DIDN'T YOU? **DIDN'T YOU?**
I DID THE MATHS, STARK!
SOMEHOW I DOUBT HE'S BEEN GETTING PROPER **TREATMENT.**
ELI WARREN
PHONE.
CALL **ELI WARREN.**
ELI WARREN IS AN OLD **MENTOR** OF MINE--A **TECHNOLOGIST-SLASH-TECH-THIEF** SPECIALIZING IN **SPACE MIGRATION.** BEING ON THE FIRST OFFICIAL **LUNAR COLONY** IS A DREAM COME **TRUE** FOR HIM.
LAST TIME I SAW HIM, I KINDA SORTA **MERCILESSLY ANNIHILATED** HIS **HOPES** AND **DREAMS.**
SO HE **MAYBE** HOLDS A GRUDGE...
HULLO, **TONY.**
MY **RECORDS** SHOW A MAN NAMED **THOMAS WILKINS** CAME UP HERE AS PART OF **YOUR** TECH TEAM, ELI.
YEAH, HE'S **OUR ENERGY EXPERT.**
LOT OF **HEAT** ON THE MOON DURING THE **LUNAR DAY**--NO **ATMOSPHERE**, SEE? NOTHING TO BLOCK THE **SUN.**
TOM'S TECH CAN DO A **LOT** WITH THAT...
HE'S **TRYING** TO **KILL ME, ELI.**

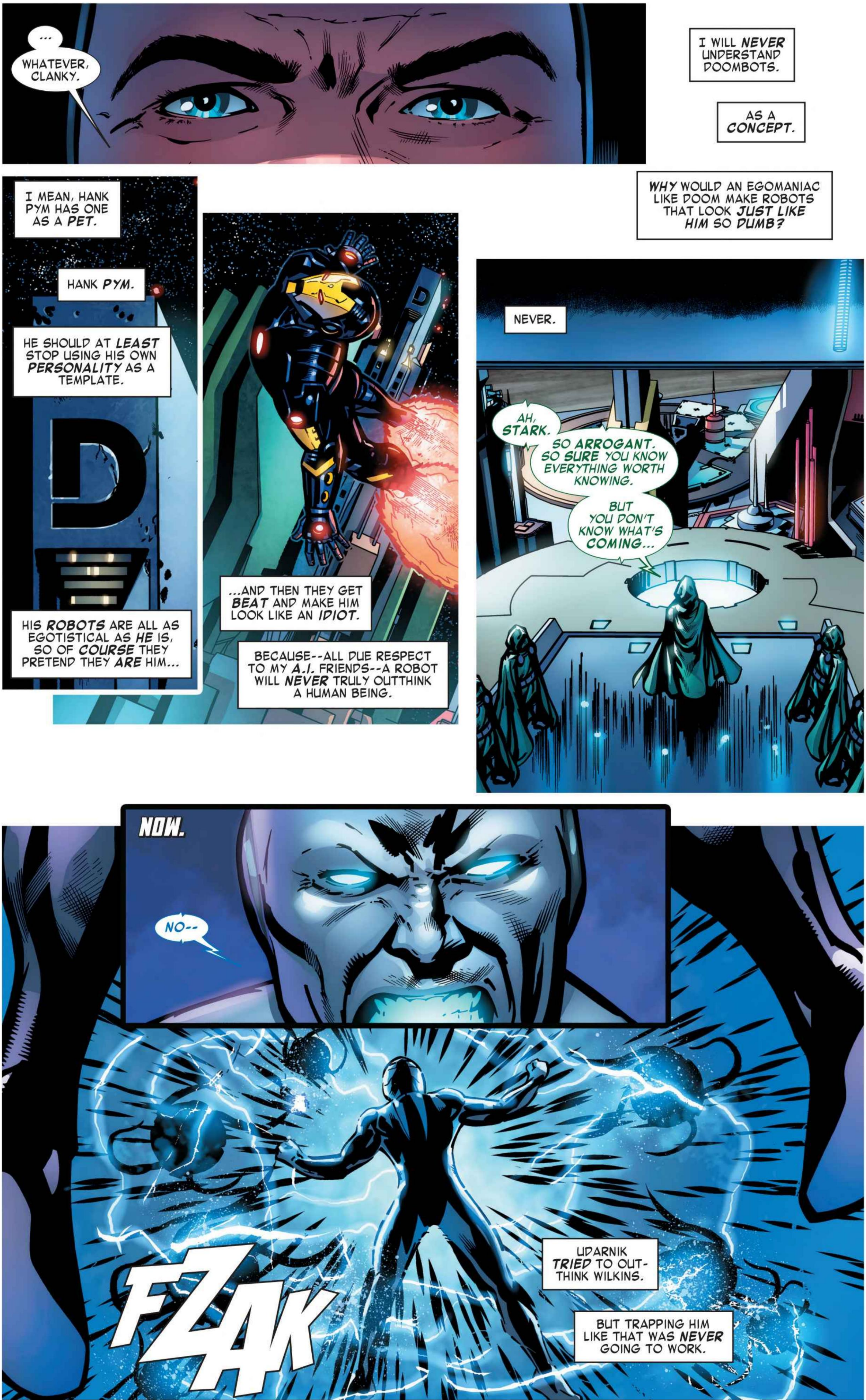

WELL I NEVER.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT.
STILL, *YOU'RE* THE ONE WHO THINKS GOING TO SPACE SHOULD BE *HARD*, TONY.
BEST OF LUCK.
CLK
ELI PROBABLY *DID* HIRE WILKINS IN GOOD FAITH.
THE MAN'S A BONA FIDE *GENIUS* WHEN IT COMES TO *THERMODYNAMICS*.
BUT I'M SURE HIM HAVING A PSYCHOTIC VENDETTA AGAINST *ME* IS A *BONUS*.
REPULSOR TECH--PHLOGISTONE--THEY'RE *CANCERS* ON THE ENERGY INDUSTRY! YOUR TECHNOLOGY IS PUTTING *MILLIONS* OUT OF WORK!
YOU'RE THE FACE OF AUSTERITY, STARK--
--AND THAT'S WHY YOU HAVE TO *DIE*!
DIE!
DIE!
WILKINS-- TOM--
WE CAN STILL TALK THIS OVER--
WE CAN SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS ECONOMIC THEORY LIKE CIVILIZED--
DIEEEE!
OH, WELL.
I TRIED.
BZAK
SHIELDS UP--
WHY IS IT I NEVER GET TO TALK *GLOBAL POLITICS*...

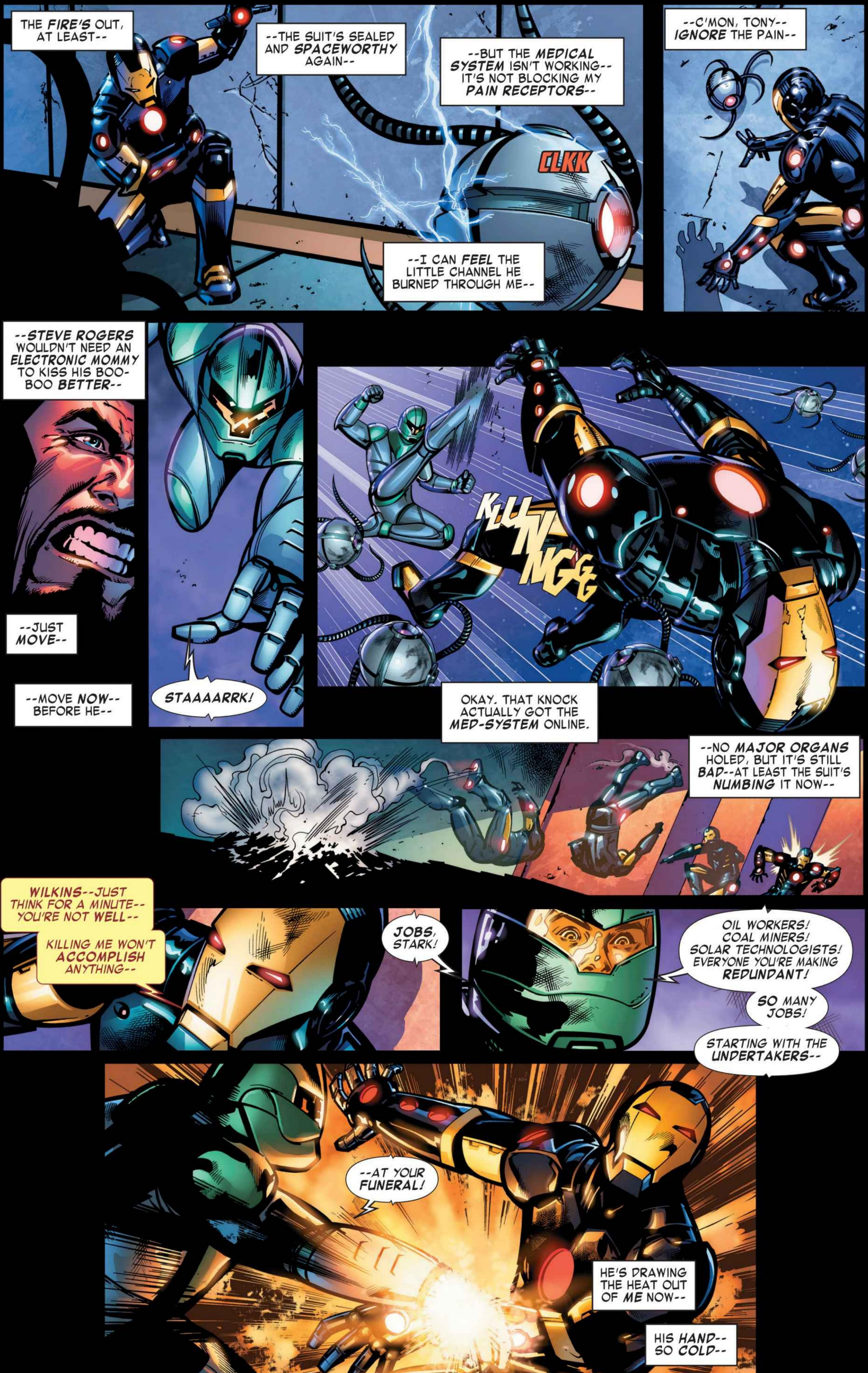

...WITHOUT SOMEONE HITTING ME...?
SYMKARIAN LUNAR EMBASSY.
ONE HOUR AGO.
HAVE AT THEE, ANTHONY STARK!
ARTHUR, I'M ONLY HERE FOR MY REGULAR CHECK-IN ON THE EMBASSIES.
I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE A PLEASANT CONVERSATION--
ARTHUR--AS IN KING ARTHUR--IS THE LEADER OF THE CIRCLE--
--A GROUP OF HIGH-TECH KNIGHTS MARTIAL WHO NORMALLY OPERATE OUT OF SYMKARIA, A SMALL COUNTRY BORDERING LATVERIA.
THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE OF CHIVALRY AND HONOR--YOU KNOW THE TYPE.
OH, THIS IS VERY PLEASANT.
FOR ME.
I SUSPECT FEDORAS ARE INVOLVED SOMEWHERE.
NOW, EN GARDE--
IT'S A SPARRING MATCH. NO REAL STAKES.
WHY ARE YOU HERE ON THE MOON, ARTHUR?
TESTING HIS NEW SUIT MORE THAN ANYTHING.
IT'S ANNOYINGLY GOOD...
BECAUSE DOOM IS HERE, OF COURSE. WHERE THE LORD OF LATVERIA GOES, THE KNIGHTS OF SYMKARIA MUST FOLLOW.
I KNOW YOU MET PRIVATELY WITH HIM AN HOUR AGO, STARK. HIS STINK IS STILL ON YOU.


I DON'T LIKE THE GUY EITHER, BUT ACCORDING TO THE U.N. HE HAS AS MUCH RIGHT TO BE HERE AS YOU DO--
OH? AND DOES HE HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT TO PHLOGISTONE?
WILL YOU SLEEP SAFELY, I WONDER, WHEN HE HAS THE POWER TO ACCOMPLISH WONDERS?
NO.
I WON'T.
THEN YOU HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE.
YOU ARE EITHER WITH US OR AGAINST US, ANTHONY STARK.
SERIOUSLY? YOU WANT TO TAKE THAT LINE?
NO OFFENSE, BUT EVEN WITH THE CIRCLE, SYMKARIA'S NOT EXACTLY A GLOBAL SUPERPOWER--
THOK
THAT'S RIGHT, TONY.
KEEP UNDERESTIMATING PEOPLE.
IT'LL BE THE DEATH OF YOU.
NOW.
IT'S VERY, VERY HARD TO UNDERESTIMATE TOM WILKINS.
AND YET SOMEHOW I MANAGE IT.
I'VE CALIBRATED MY SHIELD TO WITHSTAND HEAVY PHYSICAL ATTACKS--


--SO HE SWITCHES IN MID-STRIKE TO A PENCIL-THIN BEAM OF INTENSE THERMAL RADIATION--
--AND BURSTS THROUGH IT--
OH, LORD--
--AND IT--IT GOES THROUGH ME--
--IGNITES MY OXYGEN TANK ON THE WAY OUT--
--SO NOW I'M BURNING ALIVE AND I--
--I JUST NEED A SECOND--
--JUST A SECOND--
UDARNIK BUILDS.
OH, THANK GOD.
AND SHOCKWORKER!
BREAKS!
GET OFF ME--
THIS IS MY MOON!
BROTHERS! SWARM!
BREAK HIM!
BREAK...
NO... BUILD...
BUILD A PRISON, O MY BROTHERS. A GULAG FOR ONE.
HOLD HIM, SO HE CANNOT HURT ANYONE ELSE. OR HIMSELF.
SO HE CANNOT LEAVE.

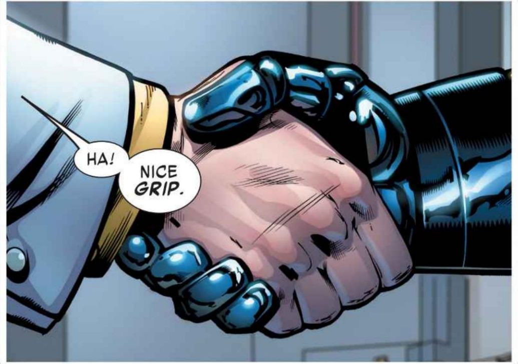

GOTTA LOVE A CRAZY ROBOT.
LATVERIAN LUNAR EMBASSY.
TWO HOURS AGO.
YOU DARE SUGGEST WE ARE NOT THE ONE TRUE DOOM?
WELL... YEAH.
FOR ONE THING, THERE ARE FIVE OF YOU.
FOR ANOTHER, I KNOW FOR A FACT THE REAL DOOM IS ON EARTH.
I MEAN, DON'T GET ME WRONG, YOU GUYS ARE GREAT ROBOTS--REALLY NICE DESIGN--
--BUT YOU'RE NOT DOOM. YOU'RE JUST NOT.
OUR ROBOTIC NATURE IS IRRELEVANT.
WE WEAR THE FACE OF DOOM.
WE SPEAK WITH THE VOICE OF DOOM.
WE ENACT THE WILL OF DOOM.
AND YOU WILL RESPECT THAT WILL.

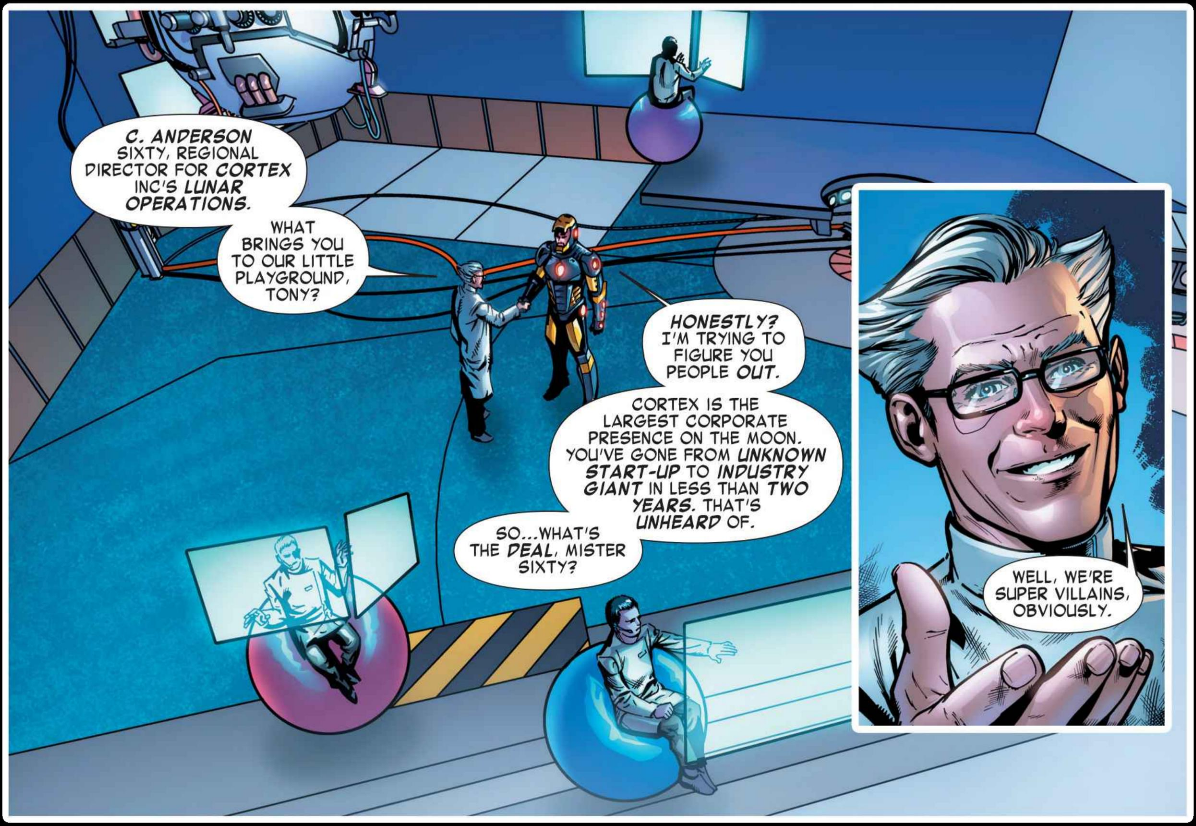

...
WHATEVER, CLANKY.
I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND DOOMBOTS.
AS A CONCEPT.
WHY WOULD AN EGOMANIAC LIKE DOOM MAKE ROBOTS THAT LOOK JUST LIKE HIM SO DUMB?
I MEAN, HANK PYM HAS ONE AS A PET.
HANK PYM.
HE SHOULD AT LEAST STOP USING HIS OWN PERSONALITY AS A TEMPLATE.
HIS ROBOTS ARE ALL AS EGOTISTICAL AS HE IS, SO OF COURSE THEY PRETEND THEY ARE HIM...
...AND THEN THEY GET BEAT AND MAKE HIM LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT.
BECAUSE--ALL DUE RESPECT TO MY A.I. FRIENDS--A ROBOT WILL NEVER TRULY OUTTHINK A HUMAN BEING.
NEVER.
AH, STARK.
SO ARROGANT. SO SURE YOU KNOW EVERYTHING WORTH KNOWING.
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COMING...
NOW.
NO--
FZAK
UDARNIK TRIED TO OUT-THINK WILKINS.
BUT TRAPPING HIM LIKE THAT WAS NEVER GOING TO WORK.

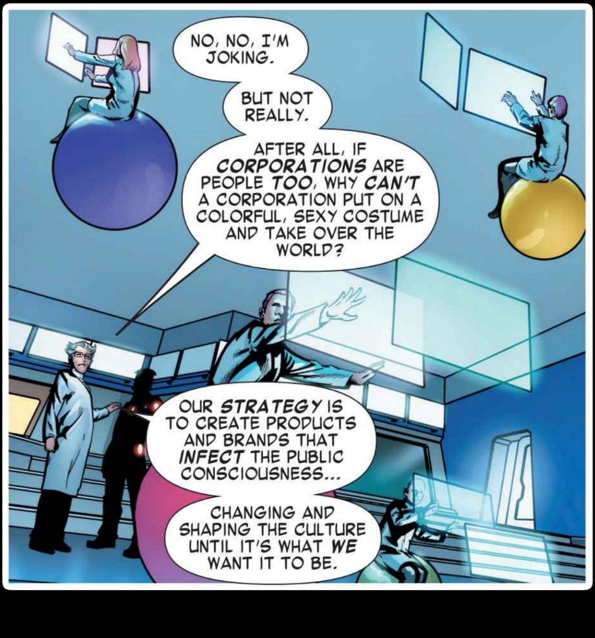

THE FIRE'S OUT, AT LEAST--
--THE SUIT'S SEALED AND SPACEWORTHY AGAIN--
--BUT THE MEDICAL SYSTEM ISN'T WORKING-- IT'S NOT BLOCKING MY PAIN RECEPTORS--
CLKK
--I CAN FEEL THE LITTLE CHANNEL HE BURNED THROUGH ME--
--C'MON, TONY-- IGNORE THE PAIN--
--STEVE ROGERS WOULDN'T NEED AN ELECTRONIC MOMMY TO KISS HIS BOO-BOO BETTER--
--JUST MOVE--
--MOVE NOW-- BEFORE HE--
STAAAARRK!
KLLUNGGG
OKAY. THAT KNOCK ACTUALLY GOT THE MED-SYSTEM ONLINE.
--NO MAJOR ORGANS HOLED, BUT IT'S STILL BAD--AT LEAST THE SUIT'S NUMBING IT NOW--
WILKINS--JUST THINK FOR A MINUTE-- YOU'RE NOT WELL--
KILLING ME WON'T ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING--
JOBS, STARK!
OIL WORKERS! COAL MINERS! SOLAR TECHNOLOGISTS! EVERYONE YOU'RE MAKING REDUNDANT!
SO MANY JOBS!
STARTING WITH THE UNDERTAKERS--
--AT YOUR FUNERAL!
HE'S DRAWING THE HEAT OUT OF ME NOW--
HIS HAND-- SO COLD--

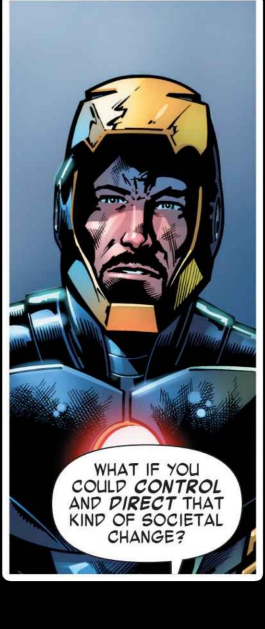
--SO COLD--

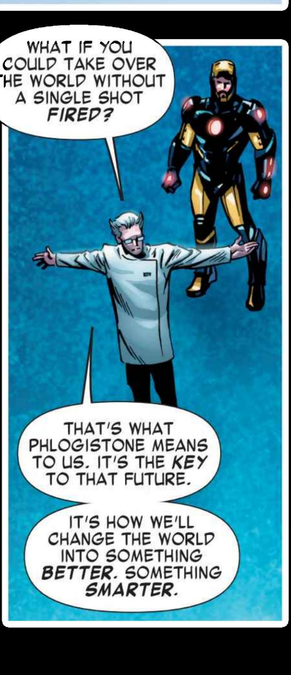
CORTEX INC., LUNAR HEADQUARTERS.

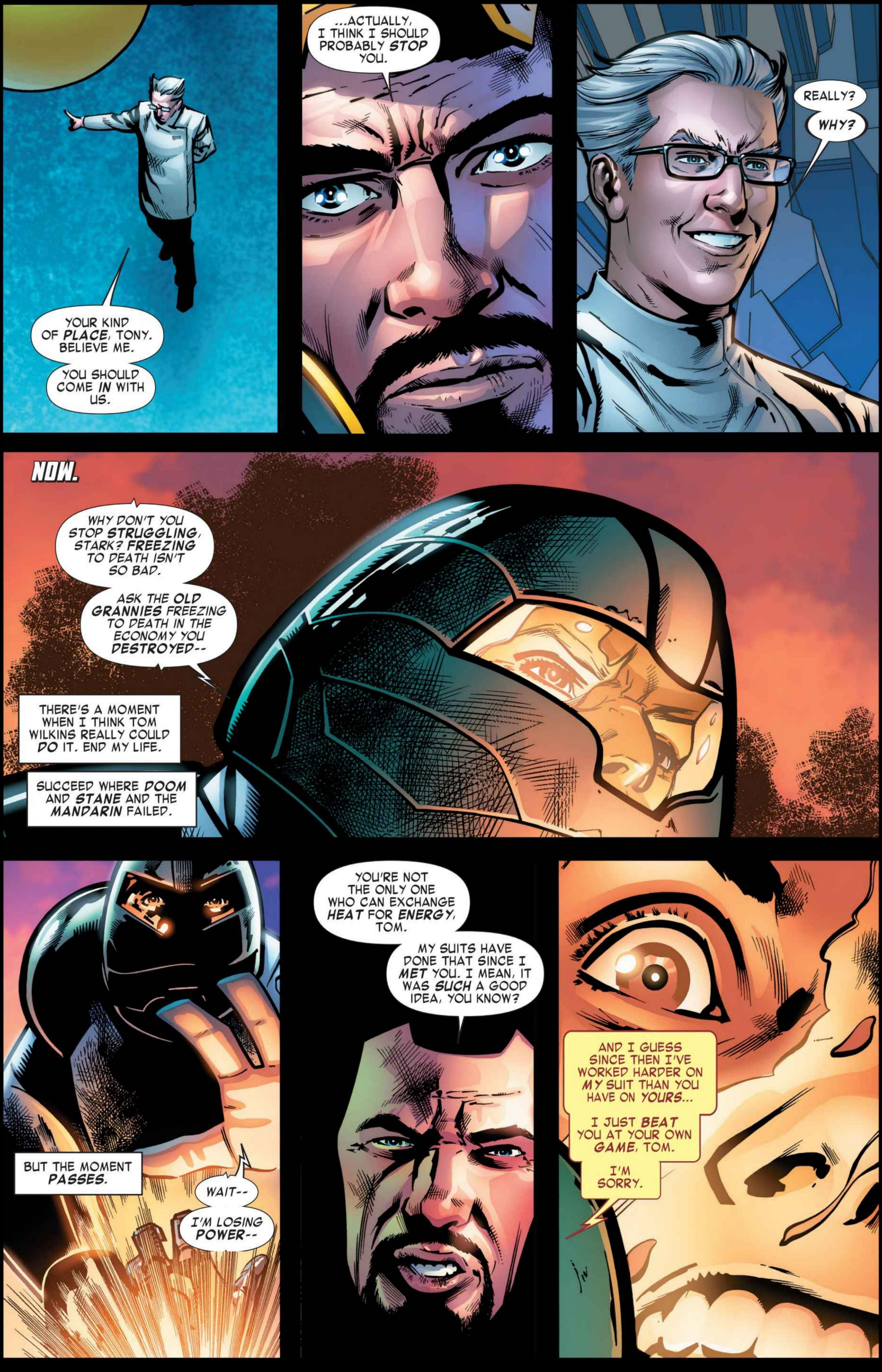

HA!
NICE *GRIP*.

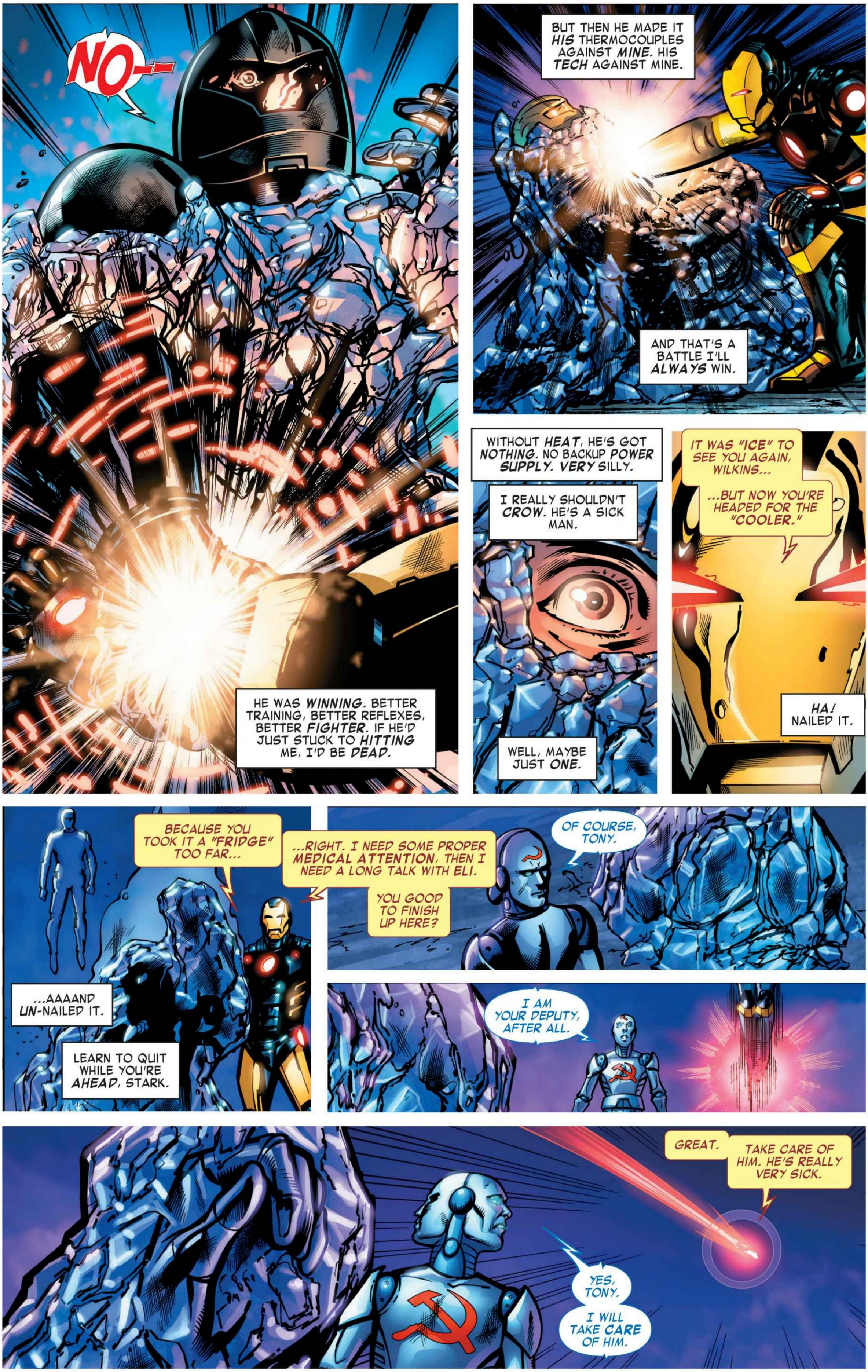

C. ANDERSON SIXTY, REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR *CORTEX* INC'S *LUNAR OPERATIONS.*
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR LITTLE PLAYGROUND, TONY?
HONESTLY? I'M TRYING TO FIGURE YOU PEOPLE *OUT*.
CORTEX IS THE LARGEST CORPORATE PRESENCE ON THE MOON. YOU'VE GONE FROM *UNKNOWN START-UP* TO *INDUSTRY GIANT* IN LESS THAN *TWO YEARS.* THAT'S *UNHEARD* OF.
SO...WHAT'S THE *DEAL*, MISTER SIXTY?
WELL, WE'RE SUPER VILLAINS, OBVIOUSLY.

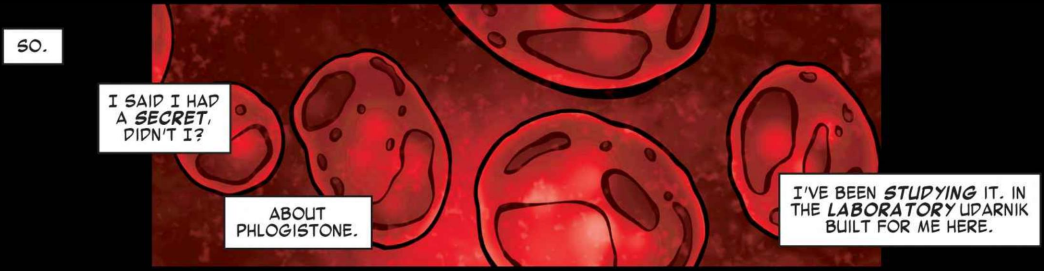

NO, NO, I'M JOKING.
BUT NOT REALLY.
AFTER ALL, IF *CORPORATIONS* ARE PEOPLE *TOO*, WHY *CAN'T* A CORPORATION PUT ON A COLORFUL, SEXY COSTUME AND TAKE OVER THE WORLD?
OUR *STRATEGY* IS TO CREATE PRODUCTS AND BRANDS THAT *INFECT* THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS...
CHANGING AND SHAPING THE CULTURE UNTIL IT'S WHAT *WE* WANT IT TO BE.

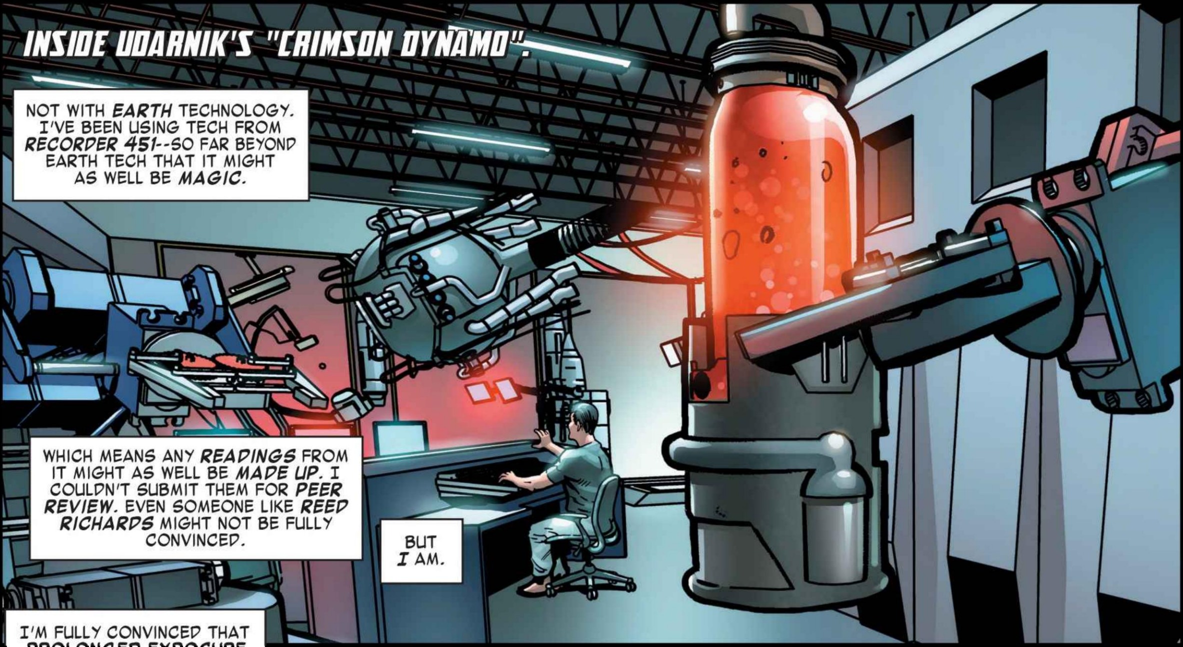

WHAT IF YOU COULD *CONTROL* AND *DIRECT* THAT KIND OF SOCIETAL CHANGE?

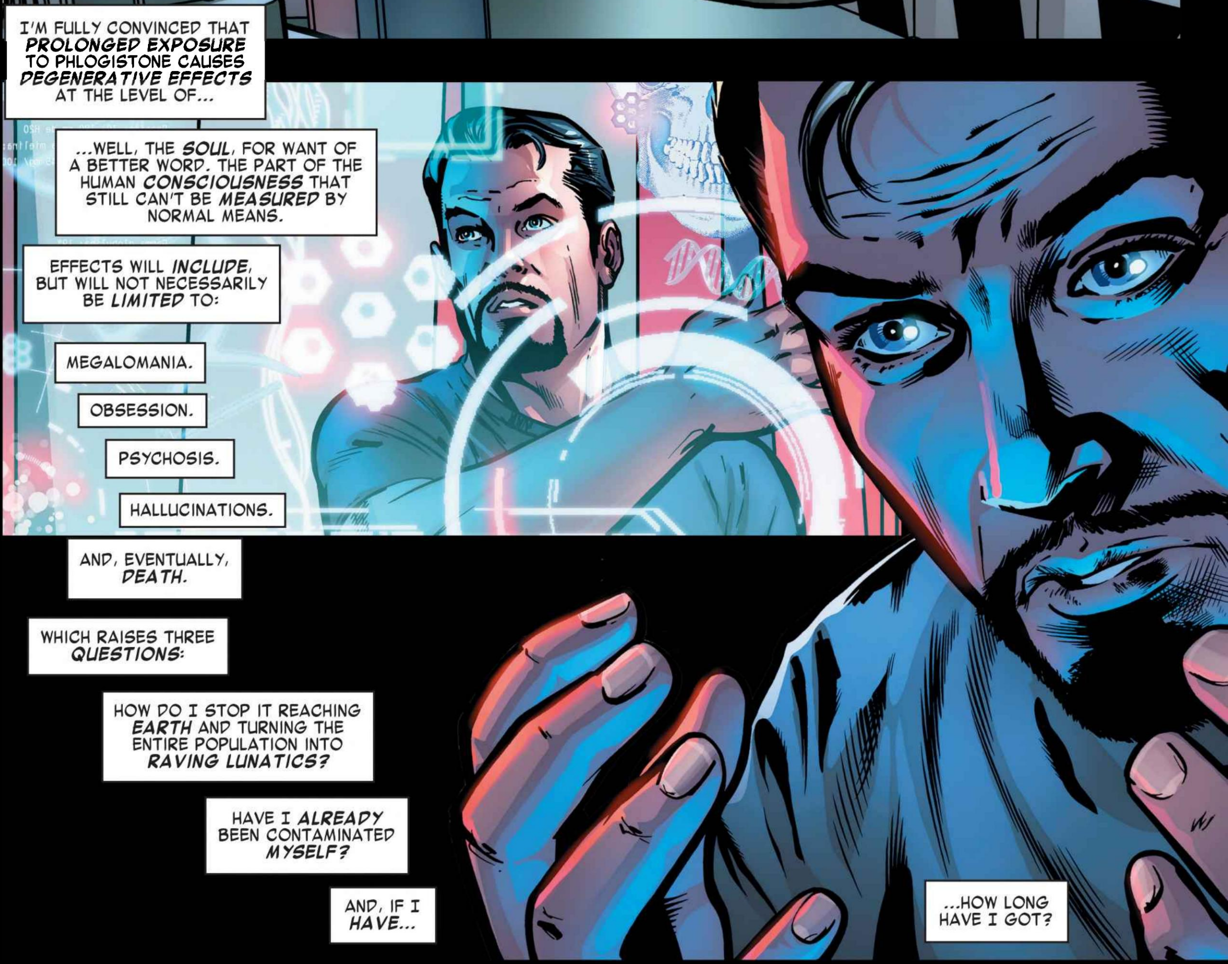

WHAT IF YOU COULD TAKE OVER THE WORLD WITHOUT A SINGLE SHOT *FIRED?*
THAT'S WHAT PHLOGISTONE MEANS TO US. IT'S THE *KEY* TO THAT FUTURE.
IT'S HOW WE'LL CHANGE THE WORLD INTO SOMETHING *BETTER*. SOMETHING *SMARTER*.

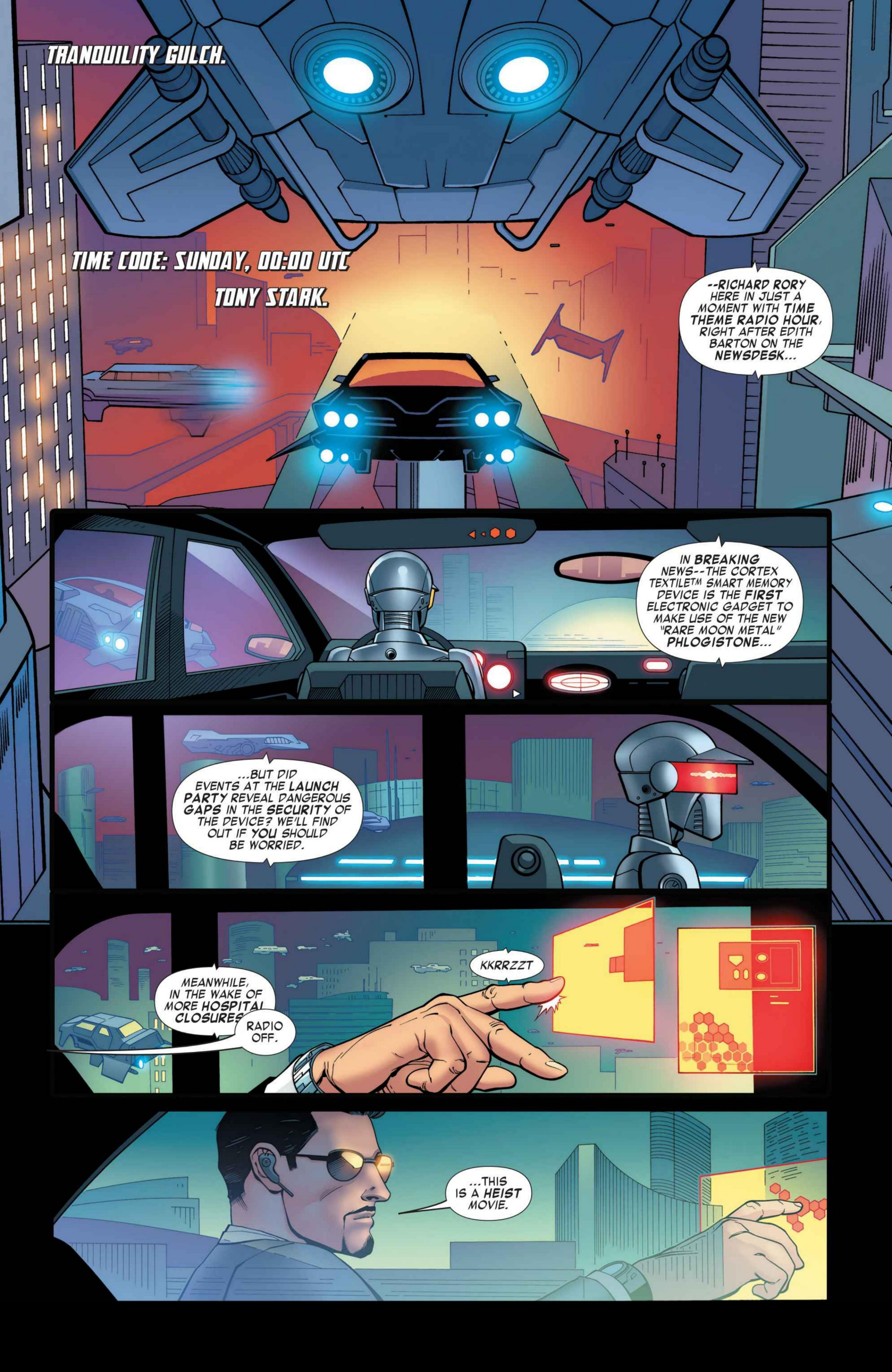

YOUR KIND OF PLACE, TONY. BELIEVE ME.
YOU SHOULD COME IN WITH US.
...ACTUALLY, I THINK I SHOULD PROBABLY STOP YOU.
REALLY?
WHY?
NOW.
WHY DON'T YOU STOP STRUGGLING, STARK? FREEZING TO DEATH ISN'T SO BAD.
ASK THE OLD GRANNIES FREEZING TO DEATH IN THE ECONOMY YOU DESTROYED--
THERE'S A MOMENT WHEN I THINK TOM WILKINS REALLY COULD DO IT. END MY LIFE.
SUCCEED WHERE DOOM AND STANE AND THE MANDARIN FAILED.
BUT THE MOMENT PASSES.
WAIT--
I'M LOSING POWER--
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN EXCHANGE HEAT FOR ENERGY, TOM.
MY SUITS HAVE DONE THAT SINCE I MET YOU. I MEAN, IT WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA, YOU KNOW?
AND I GUESS SINCE THEN I'VE WORKED HARDER ON MY SUIT THAN YOU HAVE ON YOURS...
I JUST BEAT YOU AT YOUR OWN GAME, TOM.
I'M SORRY.

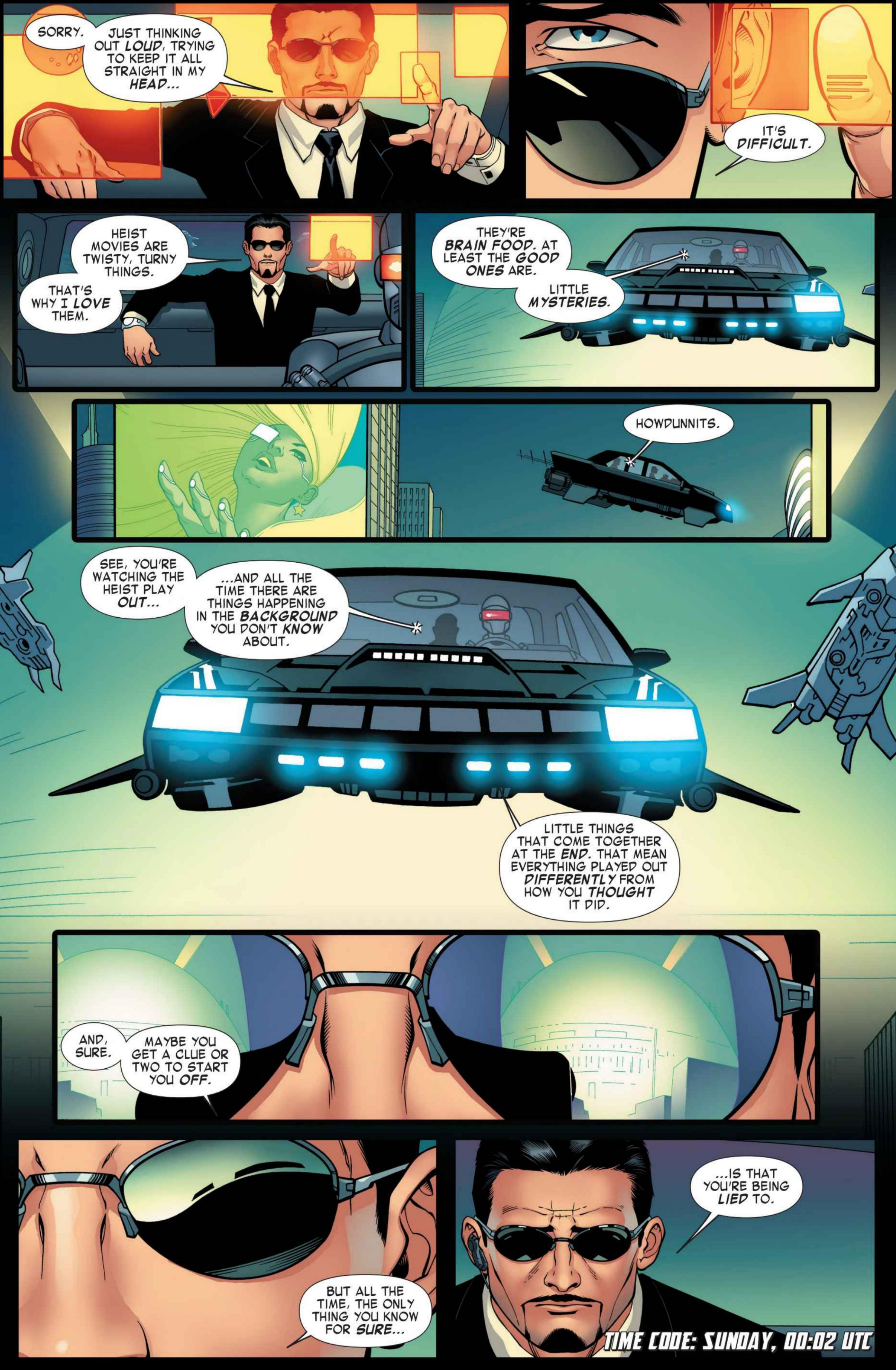

NO--
HE WAS WINNING. BETTER TRAINING, BETTER REFLEXES, BETTER FIGHTER. IF HE'D JUST STUCK TO HITTING ME, I'D BE DEAD.
BUT THEN HE MADE IT HIS THERMOCOUPLES AGAINST MINE. HIS TECH AGAINST MINE.
AND THAT'S A BATTLE I'LL ALWAYS WIN.
WITHOUT HEAT, HE'S GOT NOTHING. NO BACKUP POWER SUPPLY. VERY SILLY.
I REALLY SHOULDN'T CROW. HE'S A SICK MAN.
WELL, MAYBE JUST ONE.
IT WAS "ICE" TO SEE YOU AGAIN, WILKINS...
...BUT NOW YOU'RE HEADED FOR THE "COOLER."
HA! NAILED IT.
BECAUSE YOU TOOK IT A "FRIDGE" TOO FAR...
...AAAAND UN-NAILED IT.
LEARN TO QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD, STARK.
...RIGHT. I NEED SOME PROPER MEDICAL ATTENTION, THEN I NEED A LONG TALK WITH ELI.
YOU GOOD TO FINISH UP HERE?
OF COURSE, TONY.
I AM YOUR DEPUTY, AFTER ALL.
GREAT.
TAKE CARE OF HIM. HE'S REALLY VERY SICK.
YES, TONY.
I WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM.

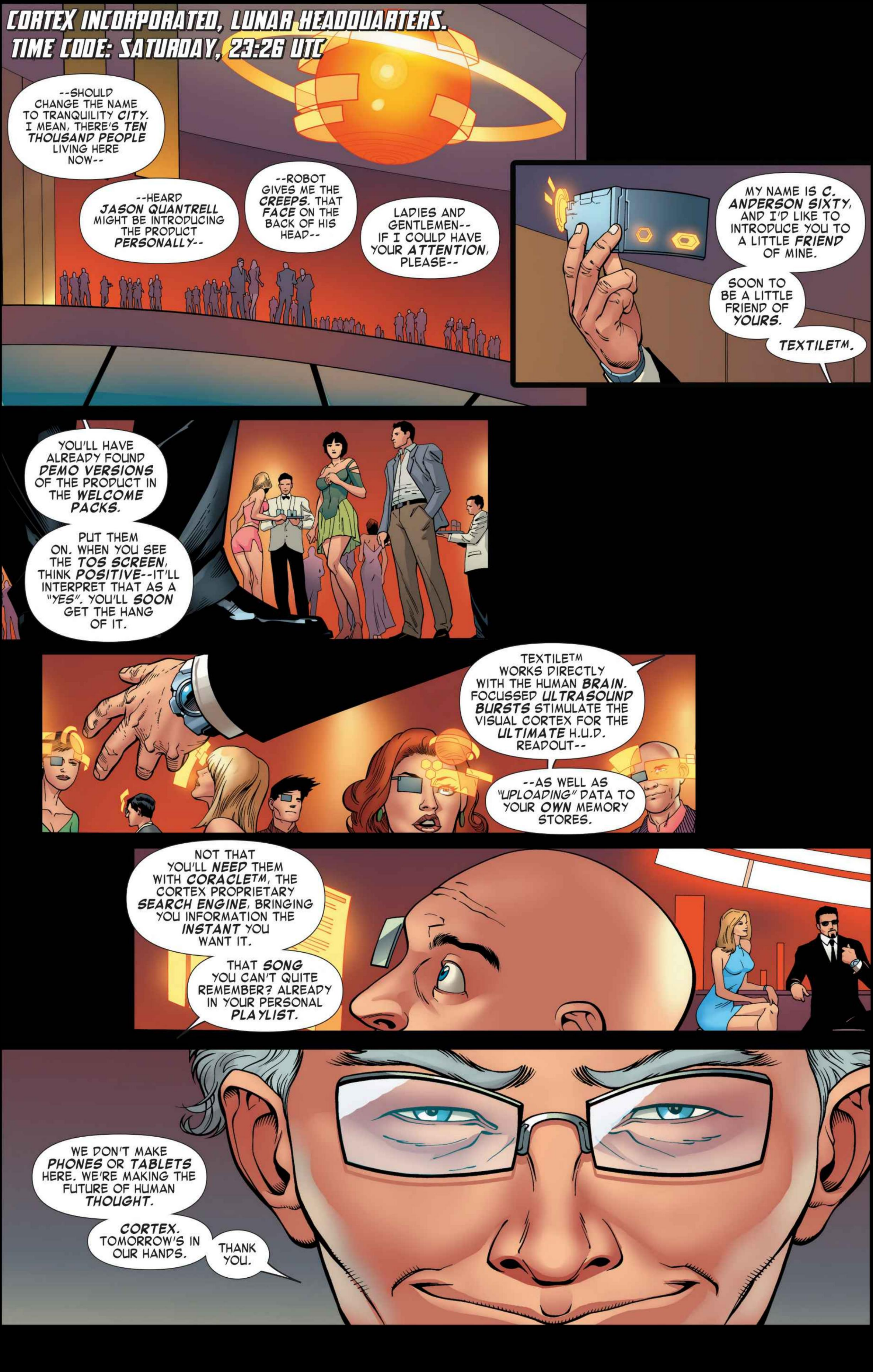

SO.
I SAID I HAD A SECRET, DIDN'T I?
ABOUT PHLOGISTONE.
I'VE BEEN STUDYING IT. IN THE LABORATORY UDARNIK BUILT FOR ME HERE.

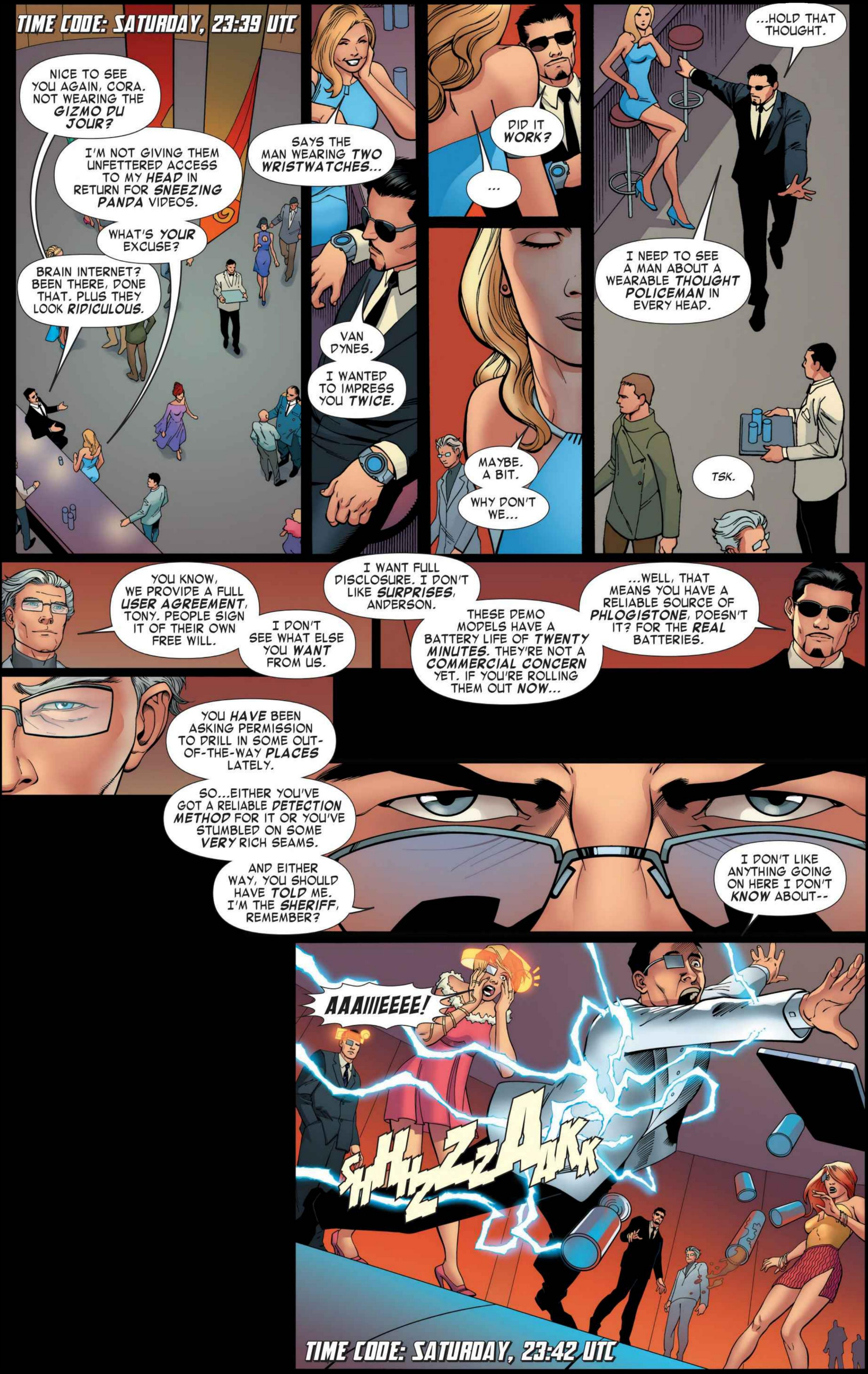

INSIDE UDARNIK'S "CRIMSON DYNAMO".
NOT WITH EARTH TECHNOLOGY. I'VE BEEN USING TECH FROM RECORDER 451--SO FAR BEYOND EARTH TECH THAT IT MIGHT AS WELL BE MAGIC.
WHICH MEANS ANY READINGS FROM IT MIGHT AS WELL BE MADE UP. I COULDN'T SUBMIT THEM FOR PEER REVIEW. EVEN SOMEONE LIKE REED RICHARDS MIGHT NOT BE FULLY CONVINCED.
BUT I AM.

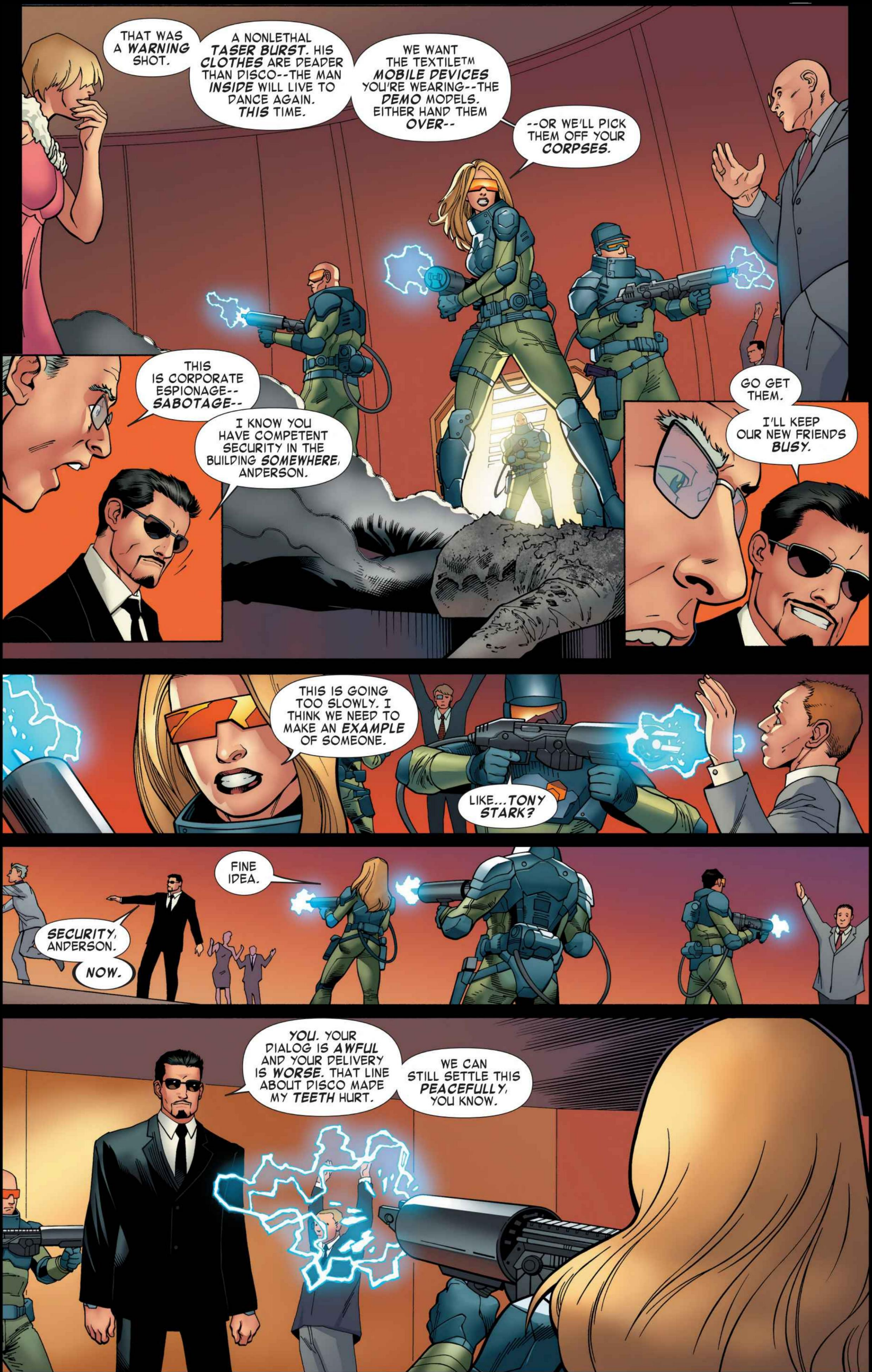

I'M FULLY CONVINCED THAT PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO PHLOGISTONE CAUSES DEGENERATIVE EFFECTS AT THE LEVEL OF...
...WELL, THE SOUL, FOR WANT OF A BETTER WORD. THE PART OF THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS THAT STILL CAN'T BE MEASURED BY NORMAL MEANS.
EFFECTS WILL INCLUDE, BUT WILL NOT NECESSARILY BE LIMITED TO:
MEGALOMANIA.
OBSESSION.
PSYCHOSIS.
HALLUCINATIONS.
AND, EVENTUALLY, DEATH.
WHICH RAISES THREE QUESTIONS:
HOW DO I STOP IT REACHING EARTH AND TURNING THE ENTIRE POPULATION INTO RAVING LUNATICS?
HAVE I ALREADY BEEN CONTAMINATED MYSELF?
AND, IF I HAVE...
...HOW LONG HAVE I GOT?

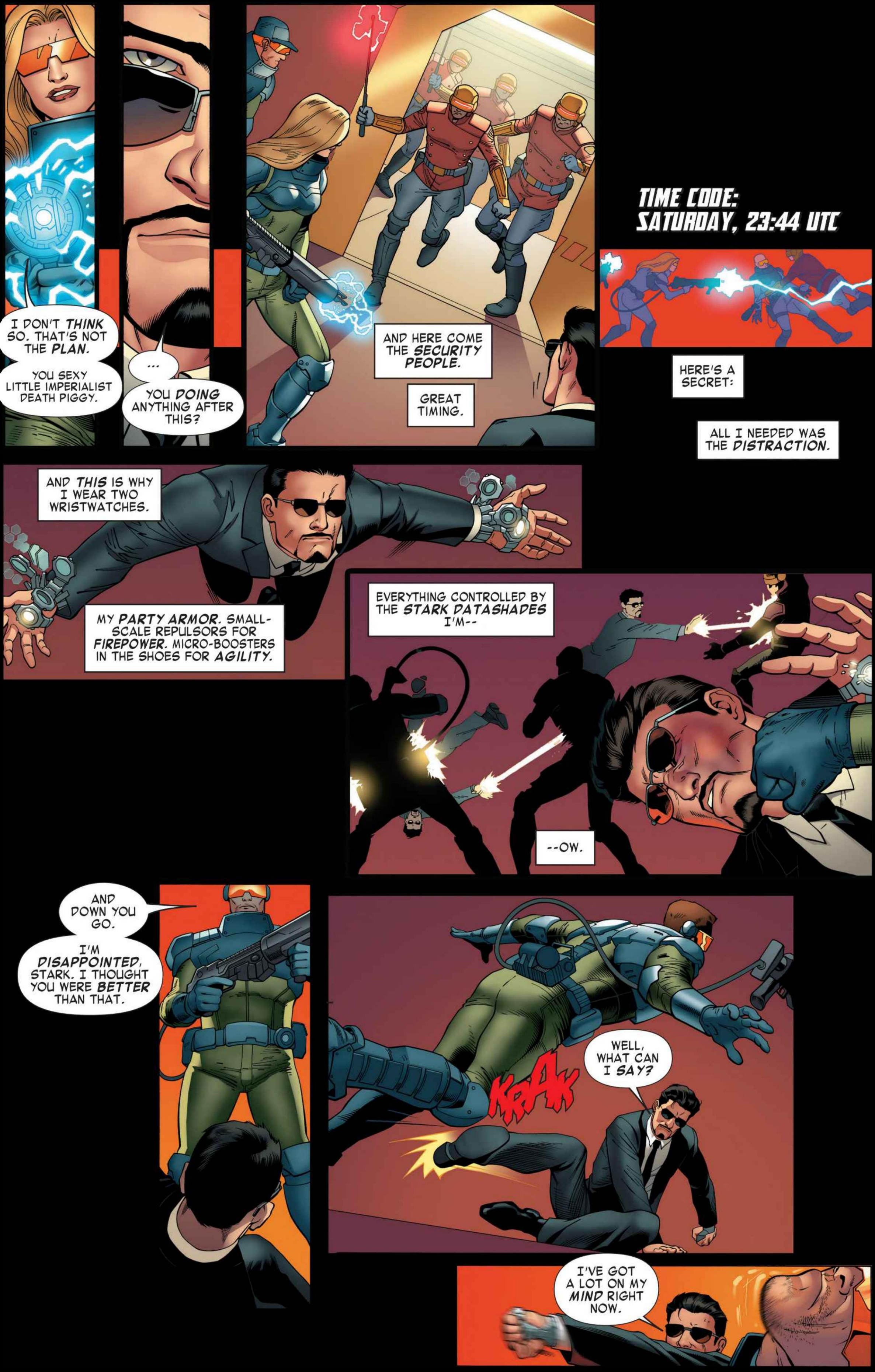

TRANQUILITY GULCH.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:00 UTC
TONY STARK.
--RICHARD RORY HERE IN JUST A MOMENT WITH TIME THEME RADIO HOUR, RIGHT AFTER EDITH BARTON ON THE NEWSDESK...
IN BREAKING NEWS--THE CORTEX TEXTILE™ SMART MEMORY DEVICE IS THE FIRST ELECTRONIC GADGET TO MAKE USE OF THE NEW "RARE MOON METAL" PHLOGISTONE...
...BUT DID EVENTS AT THE LAUNCH PARTY REVEAL DANGEROUS GAPS IN THE SECURITY OF THE DEVICE? WE'LL FIND OUT IF YOU SHOULD BE WORRIED.
KKRRZZT
MEANWHILE, IN THE WAKE OF MORE HOSPITAL CLOSURES--
RADIO OFF.
...THIS IS A HEIST MOVIE.

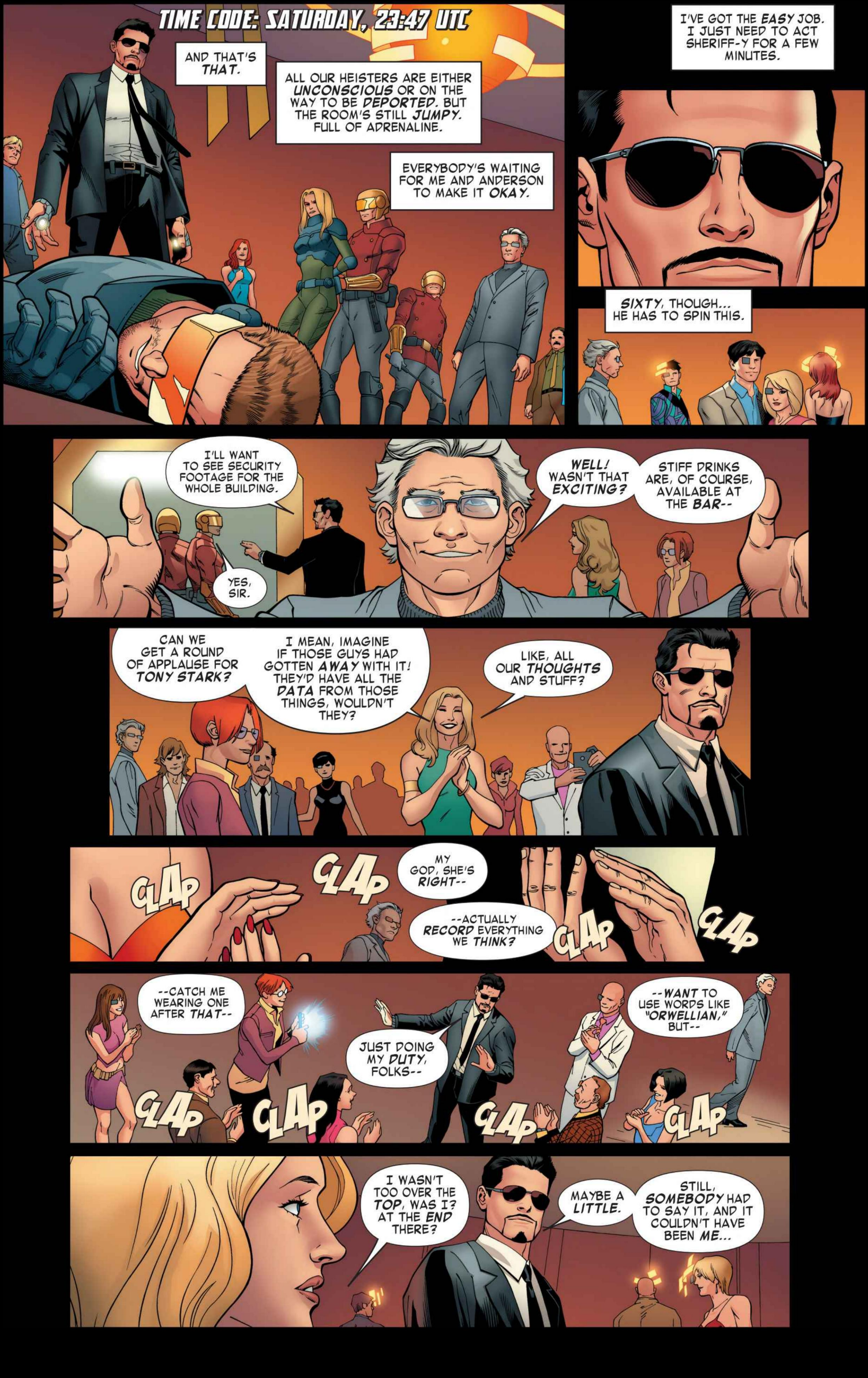

SORRY.
JUST THINKING OUT LOUD, TRYING TO KEEP IT ALL STRAIGHT IN MY HEAD...
IT'S DIFFICULT.
HEIST MOVIES ARE TWISTY, TURNY THINGS.
THAT'S WHY I LOVE THEM.
THEY'RE BRAIN FOOD. AT LEAST THE GOOD ONES ARE.
LITTLE MYSTERIES.
HOWDUNNITS.
SEE, YOU'RE WATCHING THE HEIST PLAY OUT...
...AND ALL THE TIME THERE ARE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE BACKGROUND YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
LITTLE THINGS THAT COME TOGETHER AT THE END. THAT MEAN EVERYTHING PLAYED OUT DIFFERENTLY FROM HOW YOU THOUGHT IT DID.
AND, SURE.
MAYBE YOU GET A CLUE OR TWO TO START YOU OFF.
BUT ALL THE TIME, THE ONLY THING YOU KNOW FOR SURE...
...IS THAT YOU'RE BEING LIED TO.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:02 UTC

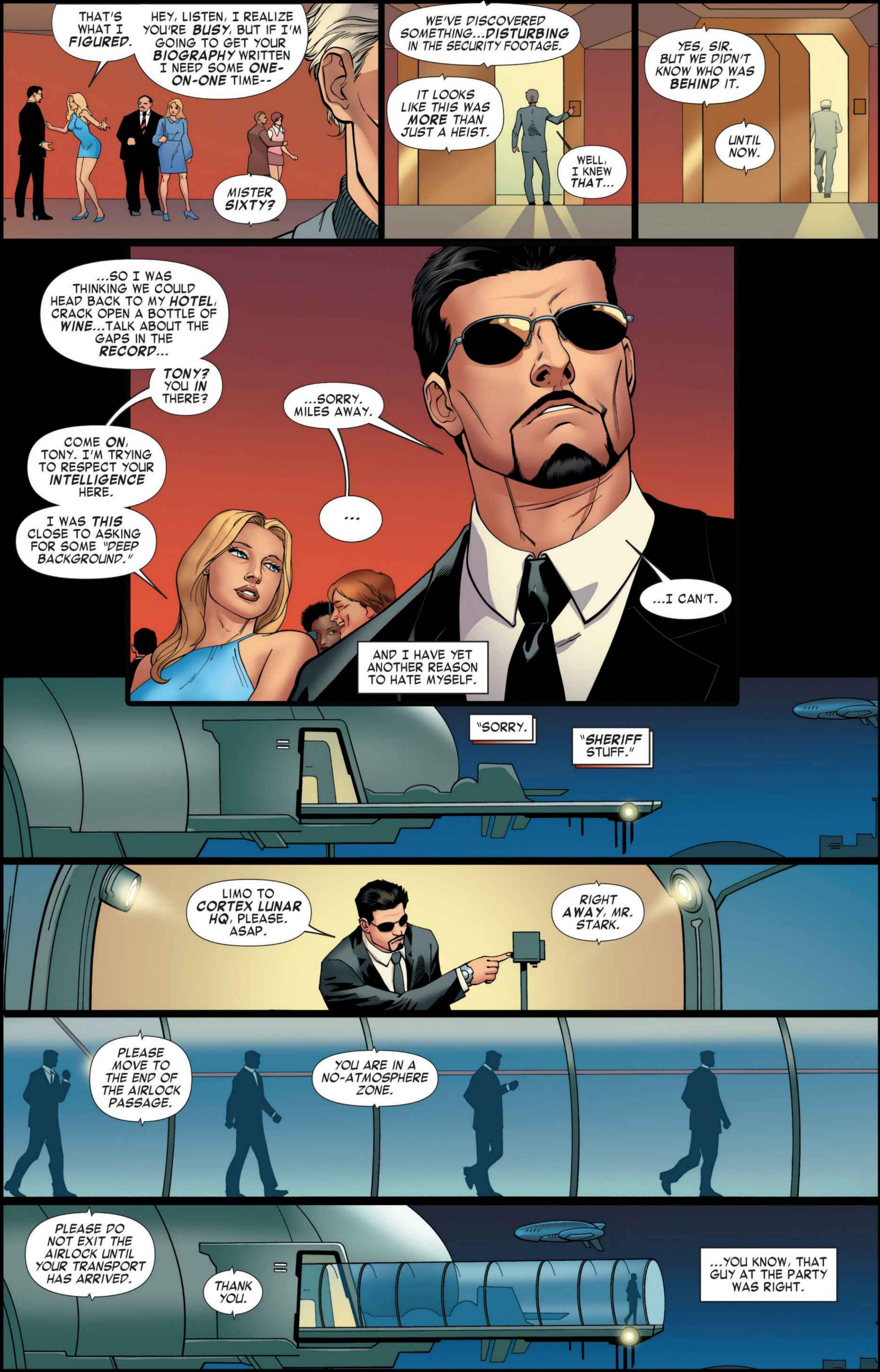

CORTEX INCORPORATED, LUNAR HEADQUARTERS.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:26 UTC
--SHOULD CHANGE THE NAME TO TRANQUILITY CITY. I MEAN, THERE'S TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE LIVING HERE NOW--
--HEARD JASON QUANTRELL MIGHT BE INTRODUCING THE PRODUCT PERSONALLY--
--ROBOT GIVES ME THE CREEPS. THAT FACE ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD--
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--IF I COULD HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE--
MY NAME IS C. ANDERSON SIXTY, AND I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO A LITTLE FRIEND OF MINE.
SOON TO BE A LITTLE FRIEND OF YOURS.
TEXTILE™.
YOU'LL HAVE ALREADY FOUND DEMO VERSIONS OF THE PRODUCT IN THE WELCOME PACKS.
PUT THEM ON. WHEN YOU SEE THE TOS SCREEN, THINK POSITIVE--IT'LL INTERPRET THAT AS A "YES". YOU'LL SOON GET THE HANG OF IT.
TEXTILE™ WORKS DIRECTLY WITH THE HUMAN BRAIN. FOCUSSED ULTRASOUND BURSTS STIMULATE THE VISUAL CORTEX FOR THE ULTIMATE H.U.D. READOUT--
--AS WELL AS "UPLOADING" DATA TO YOUR OWN MEMORY STORES.
NOT THAT YOU'LL NEED THEM WITH CORACLE™, THE CORTEX PROPRIETARY SEARCH ENGINE, BRINGING YOU INFORMATION THE INSTANT YOU WANT IT.
THAT SONG YOU CAN'T QUITE REMEMBER? ALREADY IN YOUR PERSONAL PLAYLIST.
WE DON'T MAKE PHONES OR TABLETS HERE. WE'RE MAKING THE FUTURE OF HUMAN THOUGHT.
CORTEX. TOMORROW'S IN OUR HANDS.
THANK YOU.

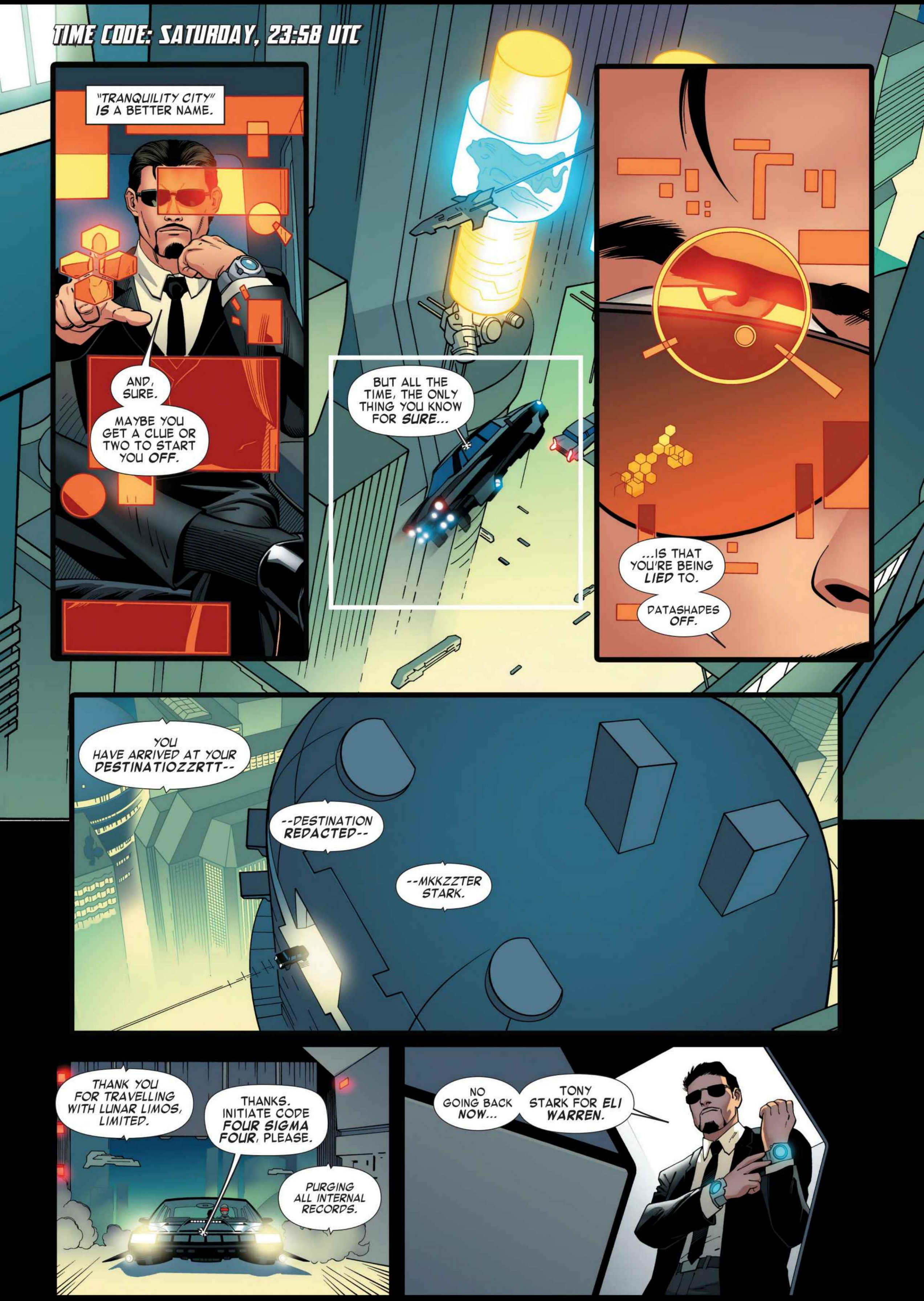

TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:39 UTC
NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CORA. NOT WEARING THE *GIZMO DU JOUR?*
I'M NOT GIVING THEM UNFETTERED ACCESS TO MY *HEAD* IN RETURN FOR *SNEEZING PANDA* VIDEOS.
WHAT'S *YOUR* EXCUSE?
BRAIN INTERNET? BEEN THERE, DONE THAT. PLUS THEY LOOK *RIDICULOUS.*
SAYS THE MAN WEARING *TWO WRISTWATCHES...*
VAN DYNES.
I WANTED TO IMPRESS YOU *TWICE.*
DID IT *WORK?*
...
MAYBE. A BIT.
WHY DON'T WE...
...HOLD THAT THOUGHT.
I NEED TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A WEARABLE *THOUGHT POLICEMAN* IN EVERY HEAD.
TSK.
YOU KNOW, WE PROVIDE A FULL *USER AGREEMENT*, TONY. PEOPLE SIGN IT OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.
I DON'T SEE WHAT ELSE YOU *WANT* FROM US.
I WANT FULL DISCLOSURE. I DON'T LIKE *SURPRISES*, ANDERSON.
THESE DEMO MODELS HAVE A BATTERY LIFE OF *TWENTY MINUTES.* THEY'RE NOT A *COMMERCIAL CONCERN* YET. IF YOU'RE ROLLING THEM OUT *NOW...*
...WELL, THAT MEANS YOU HAVE A RELIABLE SOURCE OF *PHLOGISTONE*, DOESN'T IT? FOR THE *REAL* BATTERIES.
YOU *HAVE* BEEN ASKING PERMISSION TO DRILL IN SOME OUT-OF-THE-WAY *PLACES* LATELY.
SO...EITHER YOU'VE GOT A RELIABLE *DETECTION METHOD* FOR IT OR YOU'VE STUMBLED ON SOME *VERY* RICH SEAMS.
AND EITHER WAY, YOU SHOULD HAVE *TOLD* ME. I'M THE *SHERIFF*, REMEMBER?
I DON'T LIKE ANYTHING GOING ON HERE I DON'T *KNOW* ABOUT--
AAAIIIEEEE!
SHHHZZZAAKK
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:42 UTC

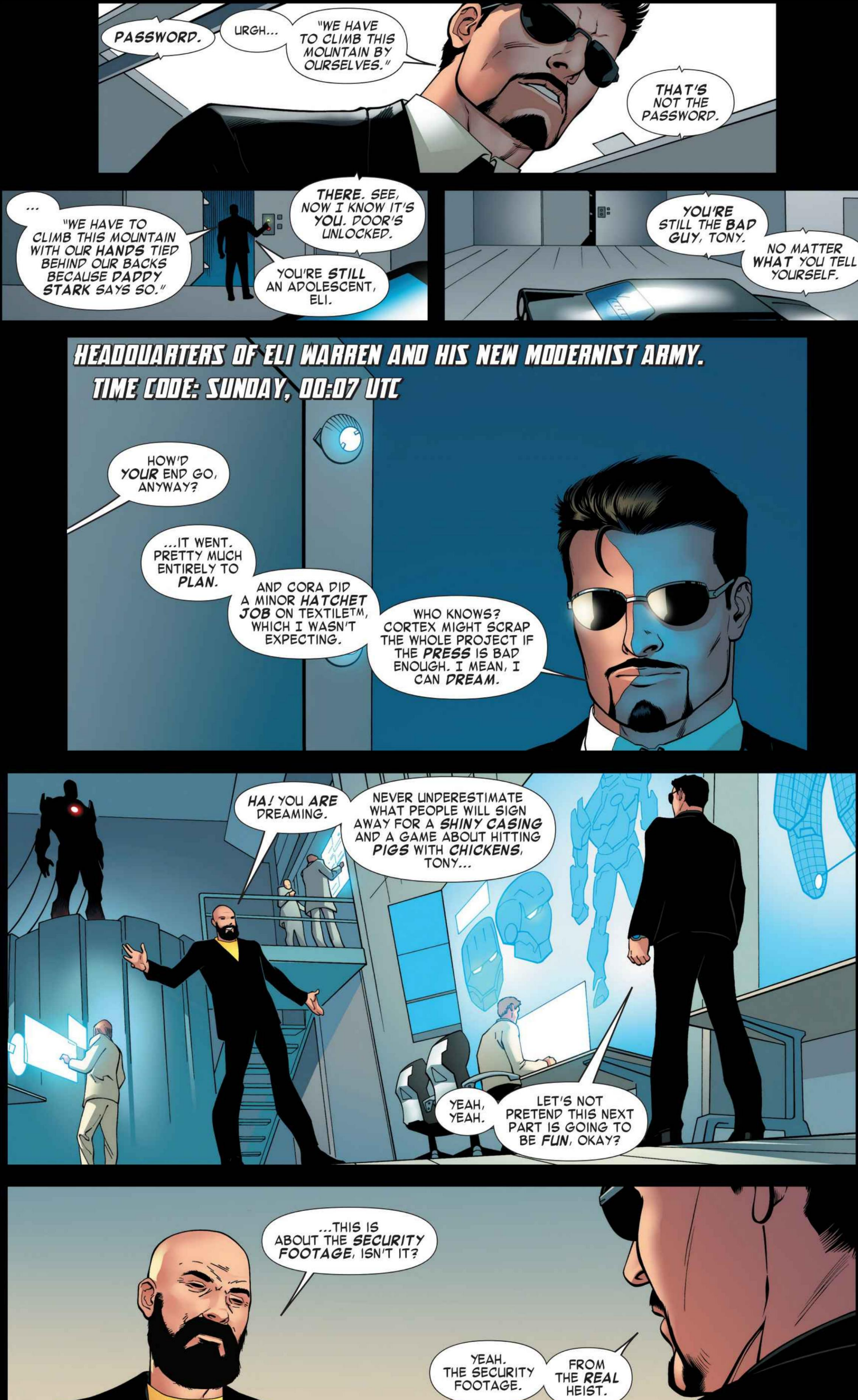

THAT WAS A *WARNING* SHOT.
A NONLETHAL ***TASER BURST.*** HIS ***CLOTHES*** ARE DEADER THAN DISCO--THE MAN ***INSIDE*** WILL LIVE TO DANCE AGAIN. ***THIS*** TIME.
WE WANT THE TEXTILE™ ***MOBILE DEVICES*** YOU'RE WEARING--THE ***DEMO*** MODELS. EITHER HAND THEM ***OVER***--
--OR WE'LL PICK THEM OFF YOUR ***CORPSES.***
THIS IS CORPORATE ESPIONAGE-- ***SABOTAGE***--
I KNOW YOU HAVE COMPETENT SECURITY IN THE BUILDING ***SOMEWHERE***, ANDERSON.
GO GET THEM.
I'LL KEEP OUR NEW FRIENDS ***BUSY.***
THIS IS GOING TOO SLOWLY. I THINK WE NEED TO MAKE AN ***EXAMPLE*** OF SOMEONE.
LIKE...***TONY STARK?***
FINE IDEA.
SECURITY, ANDERSON.
NOW.
YOU. YOUR DIALOG IS ***AWFUL*** AND YOUR DELIVERY IS ***WORSE.*** THAT LINE ABOUT DISCO MADE MY ***TEETH*** HURT.
WE CAN STILL SETTLE THIS ***PEACEFULLY,*** YOU KNOW.

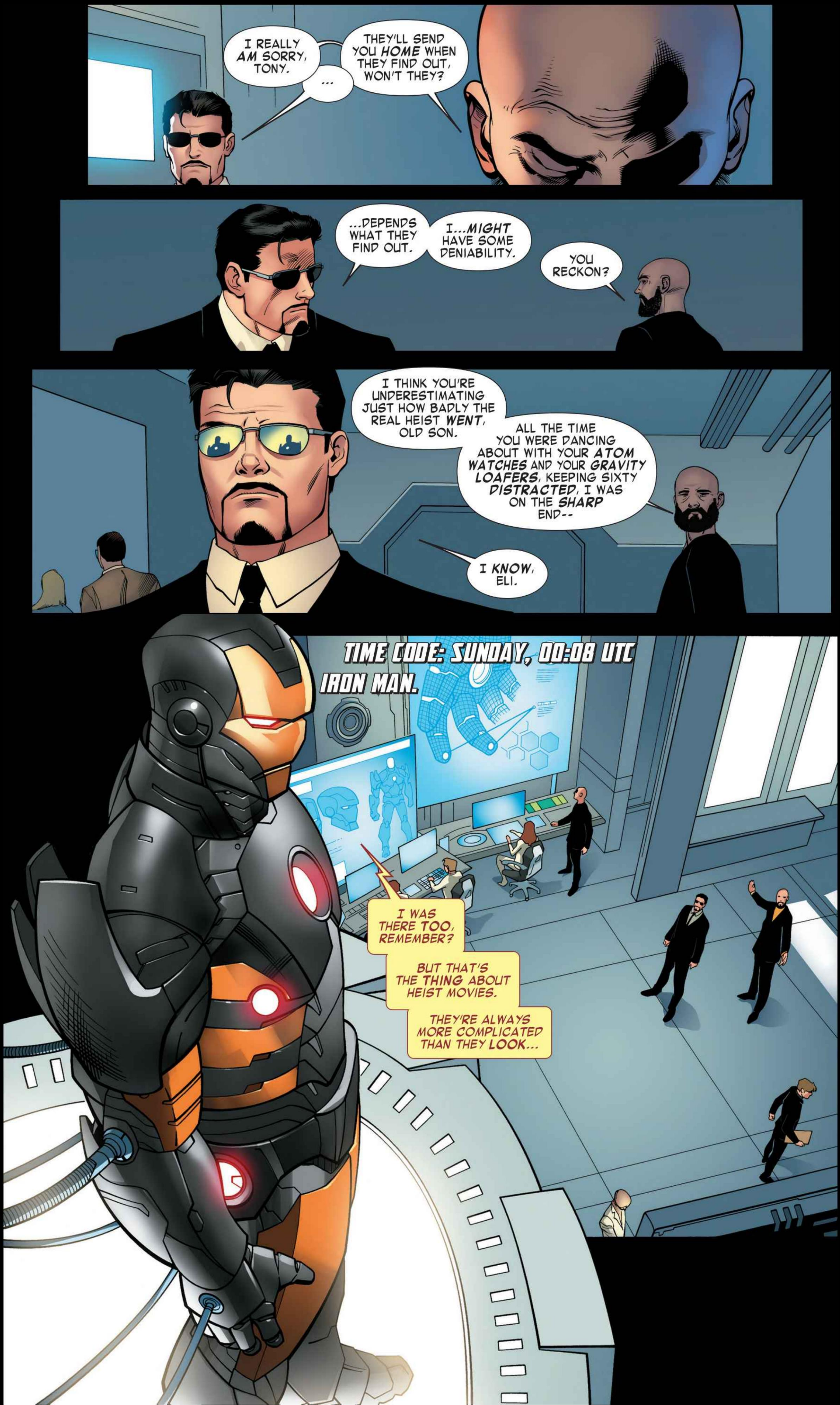

I DON'T *THINK* SO. THAT'S NOT THE *PLAN*.
YOU SEXY LITTLE IMPERIALIST DEATH PIGGY.
...
YOU *DOING* ANYTHING AFTER THIS?
AND HERE COME THE *SECURITY PEOPLE*.
GREAT TIMING.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:44 UTC
HERE'S A SECRET:
ALL I NEEDED WAS THE *DISTRACTION*.
AND *THIS* IS WHY I WEAR TWO WRISTWATCHES.
MY *PARTY ARMOR*. SMALL-SCALE REPULSORS FOR *FIREPOWER*. MICRO-BOOSTERS IN THE SHOES FOR *AGILITY*.
EVERYTHING CONTROLLED BY THE *STARK DATASHADES* I'M--
--OW.
AND DOWN YOU GO.
I'M *DISAPPOINTED*, STARK. I THOUGHT YOU WERE *BETTER* THAN THAT.
KRAK
WELL, WHAT CAN I *SAY*?
I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY *MIND* RIGHT NOW.

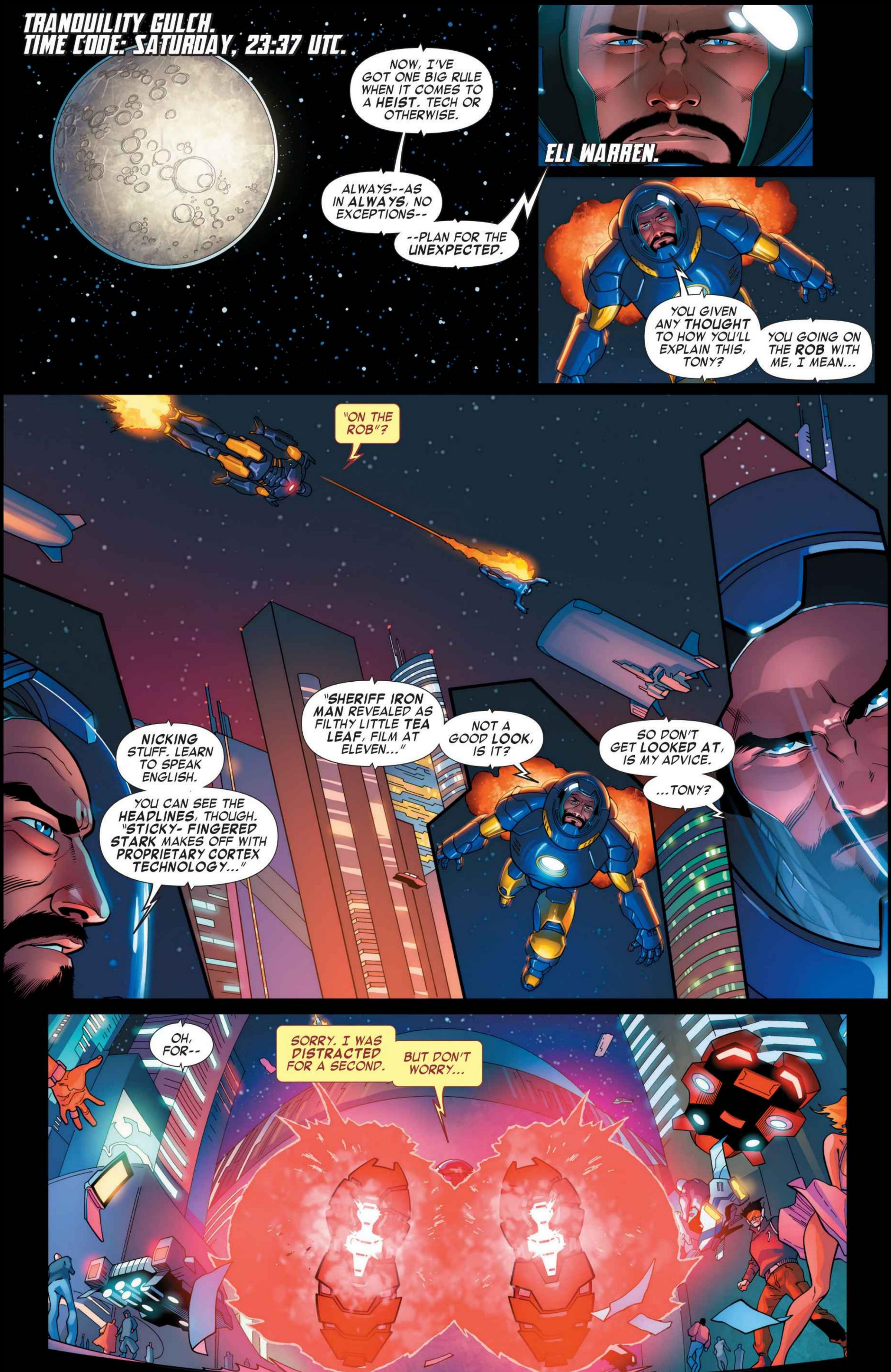

TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:47 UTC
AND THAT'S *THAT.*
ALL OUR HEISTERS ARE EITHER *UNCONSCIOUS* OR ON THE WAY TO BE *DEPORTED.* BUT THE ROOM'S STILL *JUMPY.* FULL OF ADRENALINE.
EVERYBODY'S WAITING FOR ME AND ANDERSON TO MAKE IT *OKAY.*
I'VE GOT THE *EASY* JOB. I JUST NEED TO ACT SHERIFF-Y FOR A FEW MINUTES.
SIXTY, THOUGH... HE HAS TO SPIN THIS.
I'LL WANT TO SEE SECURITY FOOTAGE FOR THE WHOLE BUILDING.
YES, SIR.
WELL! WASN'T THAT *EXCITING?*
STIFF DRINKS ARE, OF COURSE, AVAILABLE AT THE *BAR*--
CAN WE GET A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR *TONY STARK?*
I MEAN, IMAGINE IF THOSE GUYS HAD GOTTEN *AWAY* WITH IT! THEY'D HAVE ALL THE *DATA* FROM THOSE THINGS, WOULDN'T THEY?
LIKE, ALL OUR *THOUGHTS* AND STUFF?
CLAP
CLAP
MY GOD, SHE'S *RIGHT*--
--ACTUALLY *RECORD* EVERYTHING WE *THINK?*
CLAP
CLAP
--CATCH ME WEARING ONE AFTER *THAT*--
JUST DOING MY *DUTY,* FOLKS--
--*WANT* TO USE WORDS LIKE *"ORWELLIAN,"* BUT--
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
I WASN'T TOO OVER THE *TOP,* WAS I? AT THE *END* THERE?
MAYBE A *LITTLE.*
STILL, *SOMEBODY* HAD TO SAY IT, AND IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN *ME*...

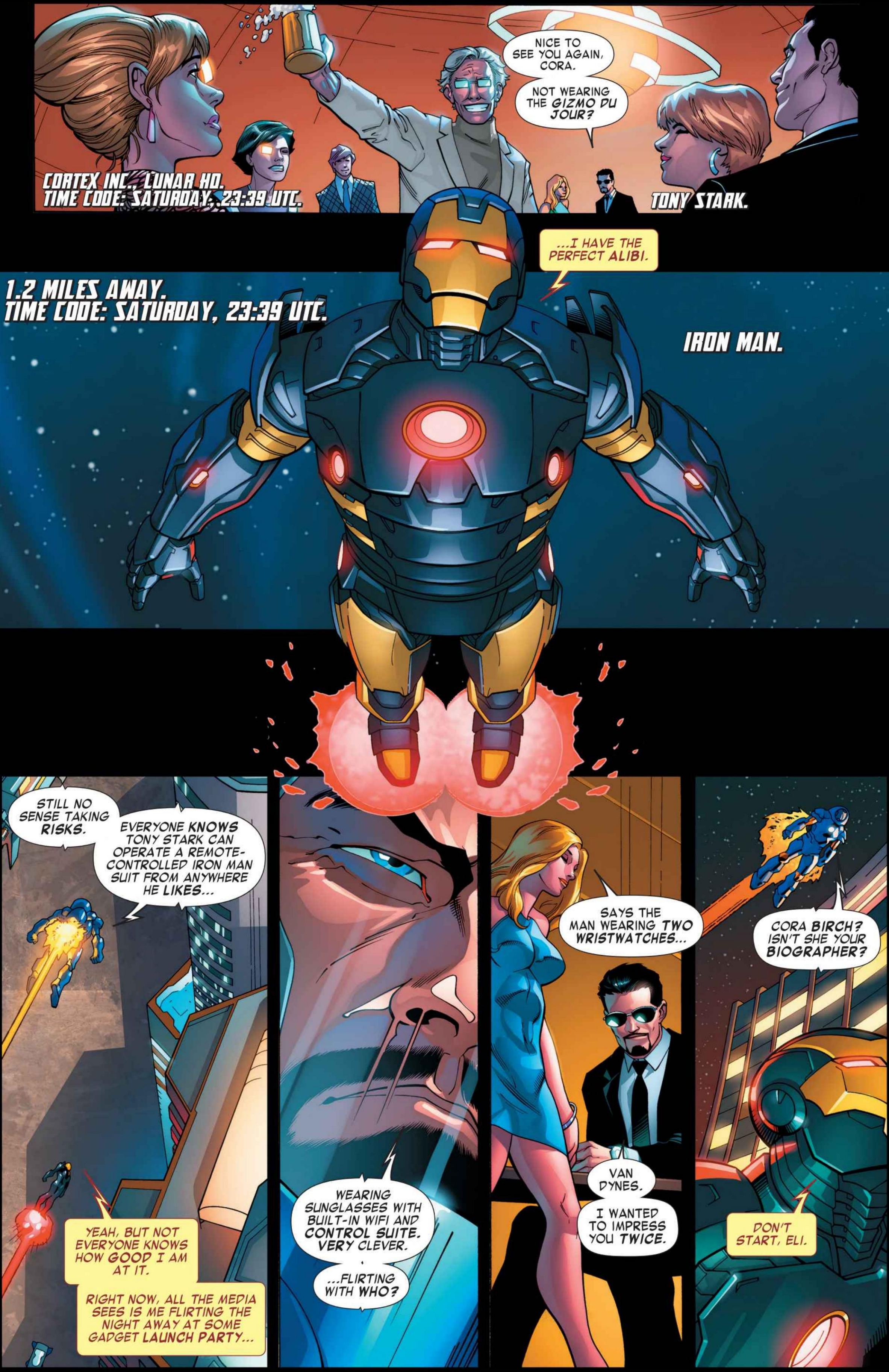

THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED.
HEY, LISTEN, I REALIZE YOU'RE BUSY, BUT IF I'M GOING TO GET YOUR BIOGRAPHY WRITTEN I NEED SOME ONE-ON-ONE TIME--
MISTER SIXTY?
WE'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING...DISTURBING IN THE SECURITY FOOTAGE.
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WAS MORE THAN JUST A HEIST.
WELL, I KNEW THAT...
YES, SIR. BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO WAS BEHIND IT.
UNTIL NOW.
...SO I WAS THINKING WE COULD HEAD BACK TO MY HOTEL, CRACK OPEN A BOTTLE OF WINE...TALK ABOUT THE GAPS IN THE RECORD...
TONY? YOU IN THERE?
...SORRY. MILES AWAY.
COME ON, TONY. I'M TRYING TO RESPECT YOUR INTELLIGENCE HERE.
...
I WAS THIS CLOSE TO ASKING FOR SOME "DEEP BACKGROUND."
...I CAN'T.
AND I HAVE YET ANOTHER REASON TO HATE MYSELF.
"SORRY.
"SHERIFF STUFF."
LIMO TO CORTEX LUNAR HQ, PLEASE. ASAP.
RIGHT AWAY, MR. STARK.
PLEASE MOVE TO THE END OF THE AIRLOCK PASSAGE.
YOU ARE IN A NO-ATMOSPHERE ZONE.
PLEASE DO NOT EXIT THE AIRLOCK UNTIL YOUR TRANSPORT HAS ARRIVED.
THANK YOU.
...YOU KNOW, THAT GUY AT THE PARTY WAS RIGHT.

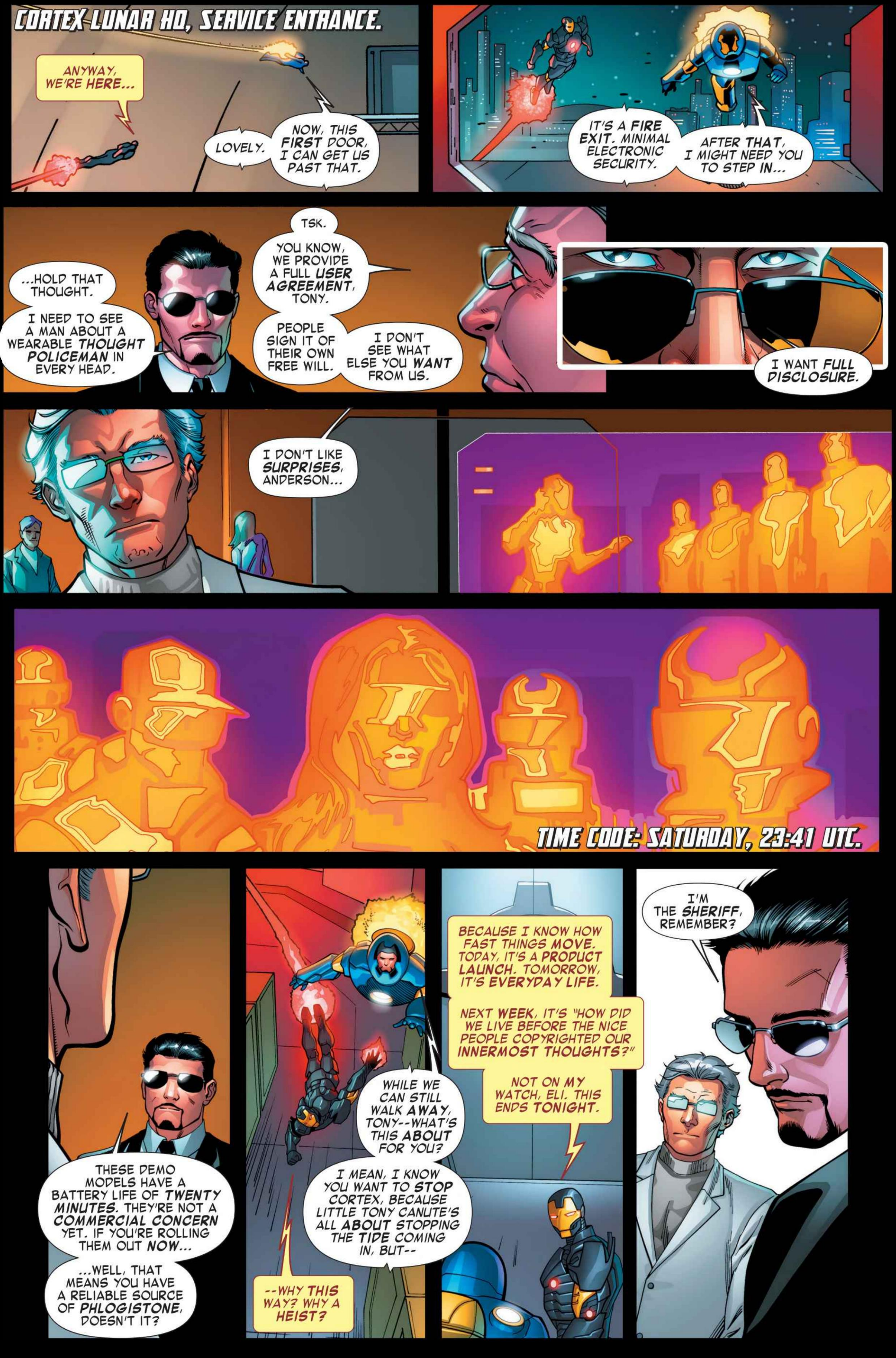

TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:58 UTC
"TRANQUILITY CITY" IS A BETTER NAME.
AND, SURE.
MAYBE YOU GET A CLUE OR TWO TO START YOU OFF.
BUT ALL THE TIME, THE ONLY THING YOU KNOW FOR SURE...
...IS THAT YOU'RE BEING LIED TO.
DATASHADES OFF.
YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT YOUR DESTINATIOZZRTT--
--DESTINATION REDACTED--
--MKKZZTER STARK.
THANK YOU FOR TRAVELLING WITH LUNAR LIMOS, LIMITED.
THANKS. INITIATE CODE FOUR SIGMA FOUR, PLEASE.
PURGING ALL INTERNAL RECORDS.
NO GOING BACK NOW...
TONY STARK FOR ELI WARREN.

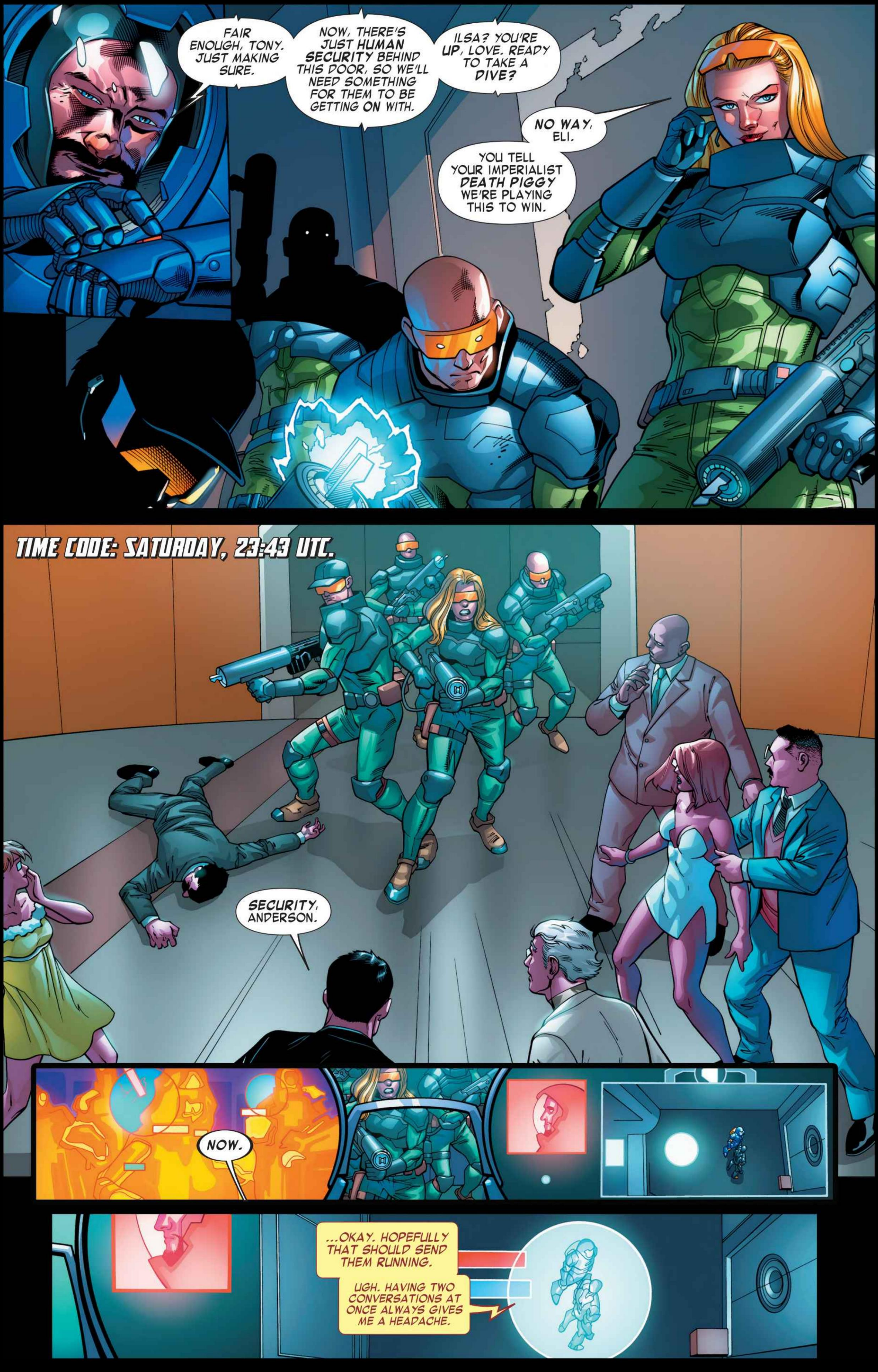

PASSWORD.
URGH...
"WE HAVE TO CLIMB THIS MOUNTAIN BY OURSELVES."
THAT'S NOT THE PASSWORD.
...
"WE HAVE TO CLIMB THIS MOUNTAIN WITH OUR HANDS TIED BEHIND OUR BACKS BECAUSE DADDY STARK SAYS SO."
THERE. SEE, NOW I KNOW IT'S YOU. DOOR'S UNLOCKED.
YOU'RE STILL AN ADOLESCENT, ELI.
YOU'RE STILL THE BAD GUY, TONY.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU TELL YOURSELF.
HEADQUARTERS OF ELI WARREN AND HIS NEW MODERNIST ARMY.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:07 UTC
HOW'D YOUR END GO, ANYWAY?
...IT WENT. PRETTY MUCH ENTIRELY TO PLAN.
AND CORA DID A MINOR HATCHET JOB ON TEXTILE™, WHICH I WASN'T EXPECTING.
WHO KNOWS? CORTEX MIGHT SCRAP THE WHOLE PROJECT IF THE PRESS IS BAD ENOUGH. I MEAN, I CAN DREAM.
HA! YOU ARE DREAMING.
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE WHAT PEOPLE WILL SIGN AWAY FOR A SHINY CASING AND A GAME ABOUT HITTING PIGS WITH CHICKENS, TONY...
YEAH, YEAH.
LET'S NOT PRETEND THIS NEXT PART IS GOING TO BE FUN, OKAY?
...THIS IS ABOUT THE SECURITY FOOTAGE, ISN'T IT?
YEAH. THE SECURITY FOOTAGE.
FROM THE REAL HEIST.

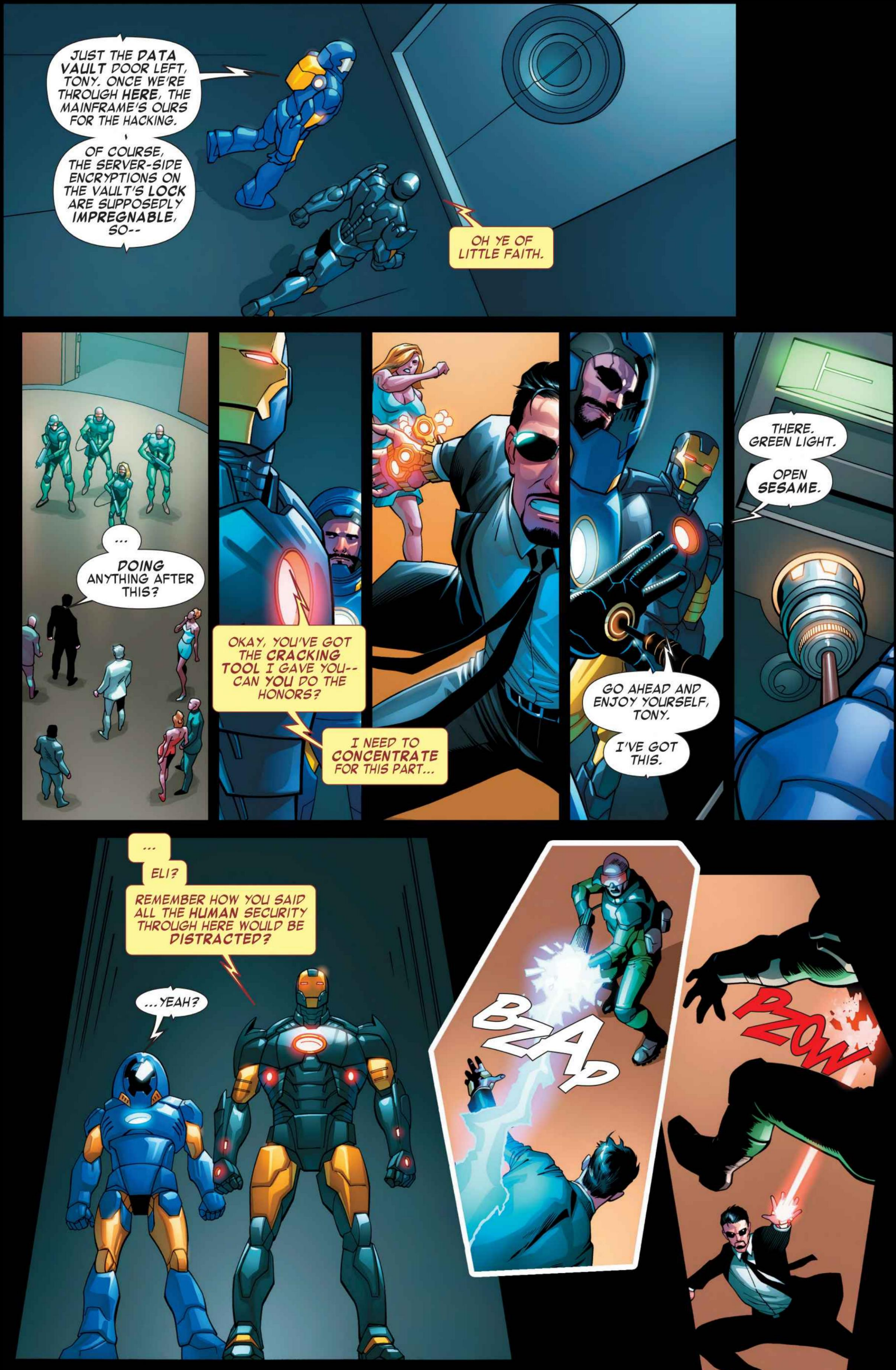

I REALLY AM SORRY, TONY.
...
THEY'LL SEND YOU HOME WHEN THEY FIND OUT, WON'T THEY?
...DEPENDS WHAT THEY FIND OUT.
I...MIGHT HAVE SOME DENIABILITY.
YOU RECKON?
I THINK YOU'RE UNDERESTIMATING JUST HOW BADLY THE REAL HEIST WENT, OLD SON.
ALL THE TIME YOU WERE DANCING ABOUT WITH YOUR ATOM WATCHES AND YOUR GRAVITY LOAFERS, KEEPING SIXTY DISTRACTED, I WAS ON THE SHARP END--
I KNOW, ELI.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:08 UTC
IRON MAN.
I WAS THERE TOO, REMEMBER?
BUT THAT'S THE THING ABOUT HEIST MOVIES.
THEY'RE ALWAYS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THEY LOOK...

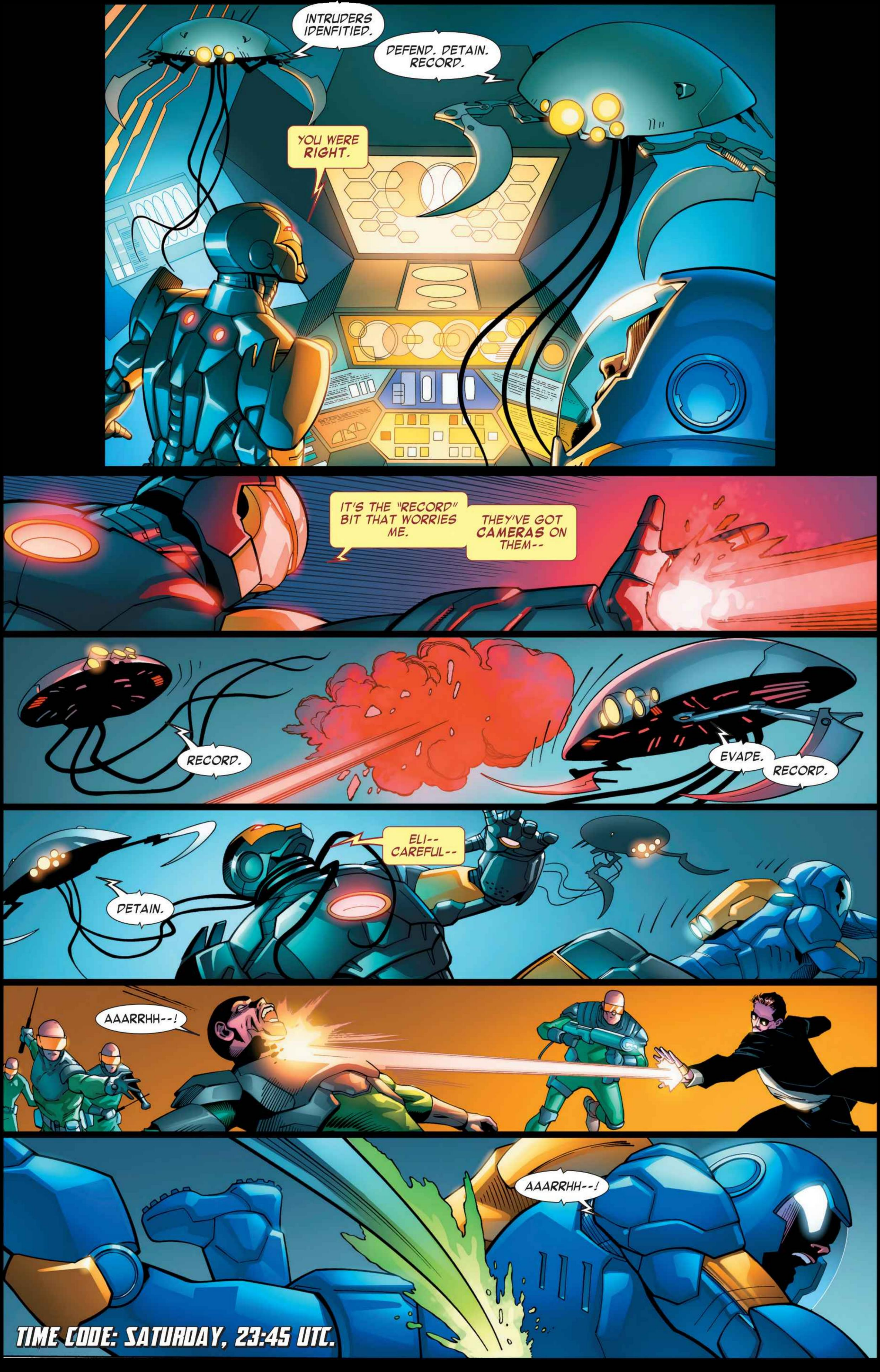

TRANQUILITY GULCH.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:37 UTC.
NOW, I'VE GOT ONE BIG RULE WHEN IT COMES TO A HEIST. TECH OR OTHERWISE.
ALWAYS--AS IN ALWAYS, NO EXCEPTIONS--
--PLAN FOR THE UNEXPECTED.
ELI WARREN.
YOU GIVEN ANY THOUGHT TO HOW YOU'LL EXPLAIN THIS, TONY?
YOU GOING ON THE ROB WITH ME, I MEAN...
"ON THE ROB"?
NICKING STUFF. LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH.
YOU CAN SEE THE HEADLINES, THOUGH. "STICKY- FINGERED STARK MAKES OFF WITH PROPRIETARY CORTEX TECHNOLOGY..."
"SHERIFF IRON MAN REVEALED AS FILTHY LITTLE TEA LEAF, FILM AT ELEVEN..."
NOT A GOOD LOOK, IS IT?
SO DON'T GET LOOKED AT, IS MY ADVICE.
...TONY?
OH, FOR--
SORRY. I WAS DISTRACTED FOR A SECOND.
BUT DON'T WORRY...

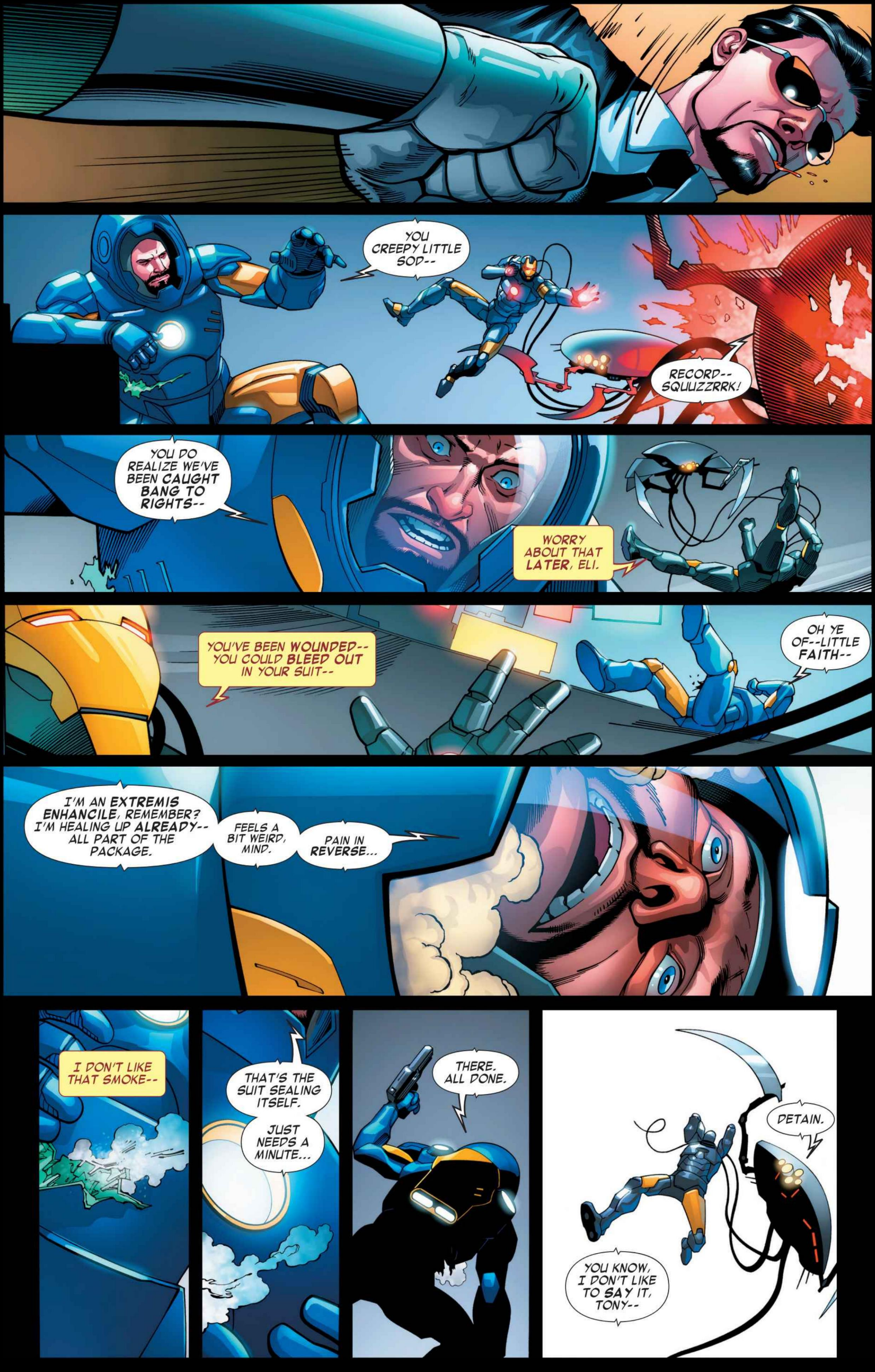

NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, CORA.
NOT WEARING THE GIZMO DU JOUR?
CORTEX INC., LUNAR HQ.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:39 UTC.
TONY STARK.
...I HAVE THE PERFECT ALIBI.
1.2 MILES AWAY.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:39 UTC.
IRON MAN.
STILL NO SENSE TAKING RISKS.
EVERYONE KNOWS TONY STARK CAN OPERATE A REMOTE-CONTROLLED IRON MAN SUIT FROM ANYWHERE HE LIKES...
YEAH, BUT NOT EVERYONE KNOWS HOW GOOD I AM AT IT.
RIGHT NOW, ALL THE MEDIA SEES IS ME FLIRTING THE NIGHT AWAY AT SOME GADGET LAUNCH PARTY...
WEARING SUNGLASSES WITH BUILT-IN WIFI AND CONTROL SUITE. VERY CLEVER.
...FLIRTING WITH WHO?
SAYS THE MAN WEARING TWO WRISTWATCHES...
VAN DYNES.
I WANTED TO IMPRESS YOU TWICE.
CORA BIRCH? ISN'T SHE YOUR BIOGRAPHER?
DON'T START, ELI.

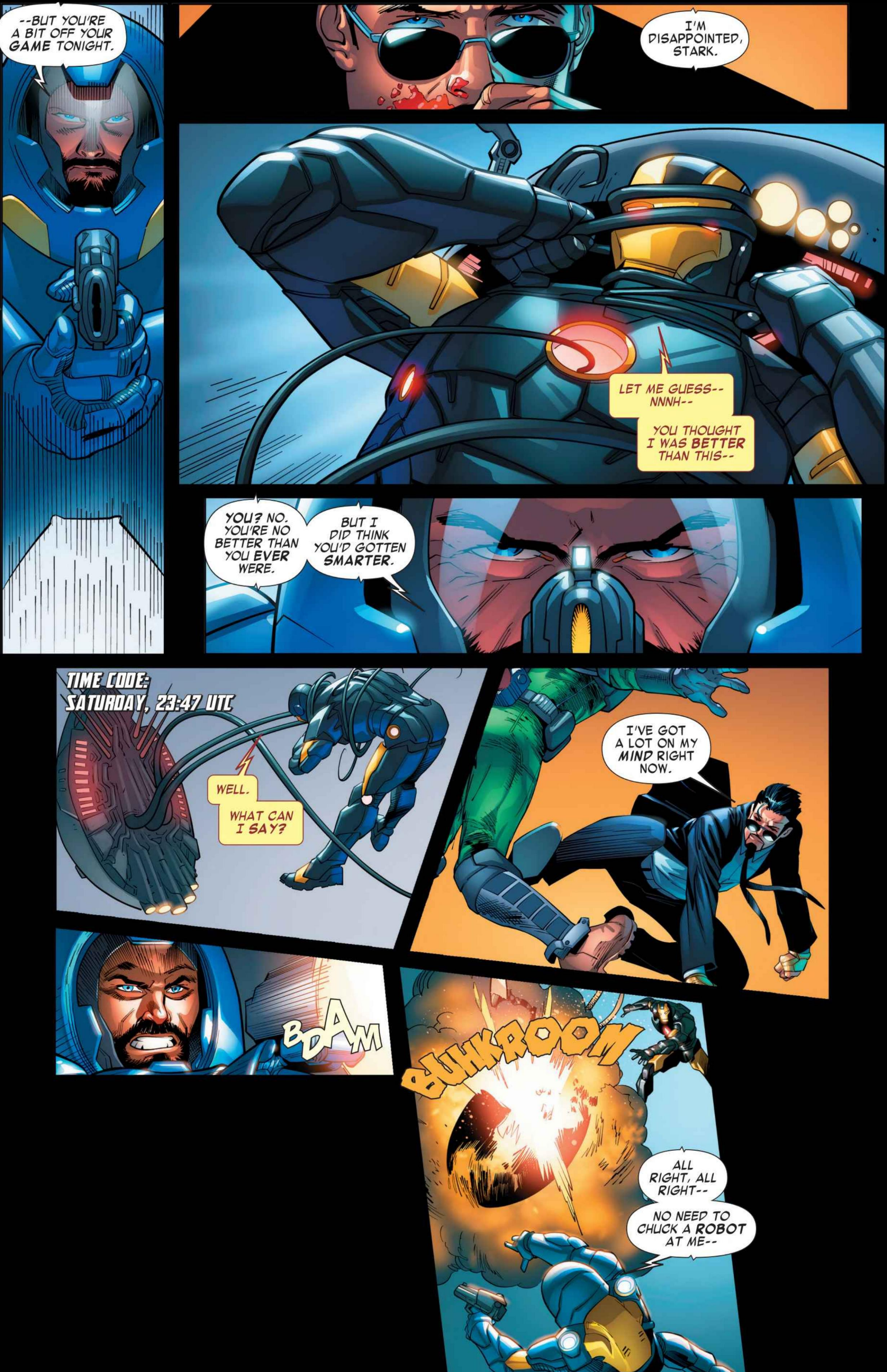

CORTEX LUNAR HQ, SERVICE ENTRANCE.
ANYWAY, WE'RE HERE...
LOVELY.
NOW, THIS FIRST DOOR, I CAN GET US PAST THAT.
IT'S A FIRE EXIT. MINIMAL ELECTRONIC SECURITY.
AFTER THAT, I MIGHT NEED YOU TO STEP IN...
...HOLD THAT THOUGHT.
I NEED TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A WEARABLE THOUGHT POLICEMAN IN EVERY HEAD.
TSK.
YOU KNOW, WE PROVIDE A FULL USER AGREEMENT, TONY.
PEOPLE SIGN IT OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.
I DON'T SEE WHAT ELSE YOU WANT FROM US.
I WANT FULL DISCLOSURE.
I DON'T LIKE SURPRISES, ANDERSON...
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:41 UTC.
THESE DEMO MODELS HAVE A BATTERY LIFE OF TWENTY MINUTES. THEY'RE NOT A COMMERCIAL CONCERN YET. IF YOU'RE ROLLING THEM OUT NOW...
...WELL, THAT MEANS YOU HAVE A RELIABLE SOURCE OF PHLOGISTONE, DOESN'T IT?
WHILE WE CAN STILL WALK AWAY, TONY--WHAT'S THIS ABOUT FOR YOU?
I MEAN, I KNOW YOU WANT TO STOP CORTEX, BECAUSE LITTLE TONY CANUTE'S ALL ABOUT STOPPING THE TIDE COMING IN, BUT--
--WHY THIS WAY? WHY A HEIST?
BECAUSE I KNOW HOW FAST THINGS MOVE. TODAY, IT'S A PRODUCT LAUNCH. TOMORROW, IT'S EVERYDAY LIFE.
NEXT WEEK, IT'S "HOW DID WE LIVE BEFORE THE NICE PEOPLE COPYRIGHTED OUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS?"
NOT ON MY WATCH, ELI. THIS ENDS TONIGHT.
I'M THE SHERIFF, REMEMBER?

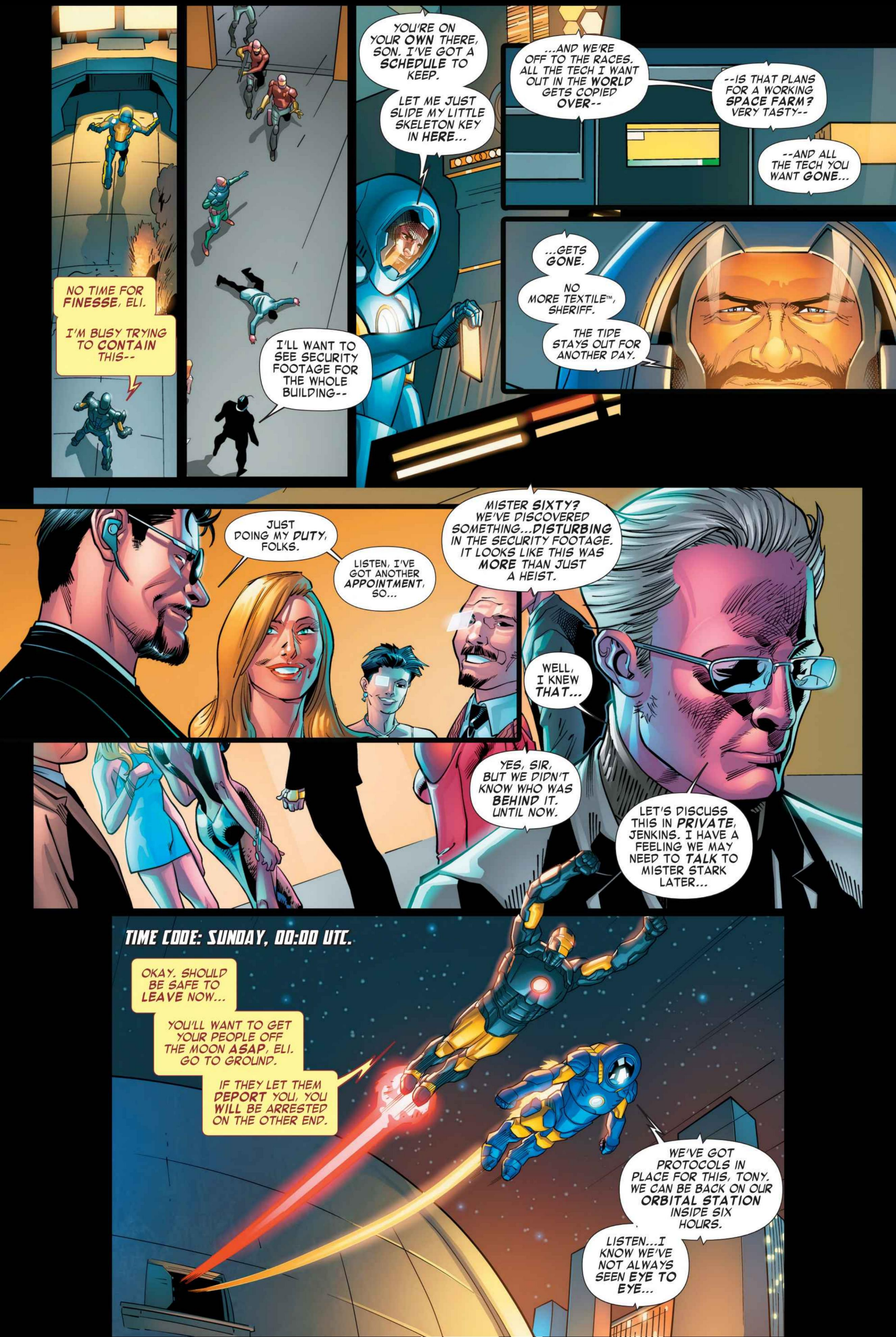

FAIR ENOUGH, TONY. JUST MAKING SURE.
NOW, THERE'S JUST HUMAN SECURITY BEHIND THIS DOOR, SO WE'LL NEED SOMETHING FOR THEM TO BE GETTING ON WITH.
ILSA? YOU'RE UP, LOVE. READY TO TAKE A DIVE?
NO WAY, ELI.
YOU TELL YOUR IMPERIALIST DEATH PIGGY WE'RE PLAYING THIS TO WIN.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43 UTC.
SECURITY, ANDERSON.
NOW.
...OKAY. HOPEFULLY THAT SHOULD SEND THEM RUNNING.
UGH. HAVING TWO CONVERSATIONS AT ONCE ALWAYS GIVES ME A HEADACHE.

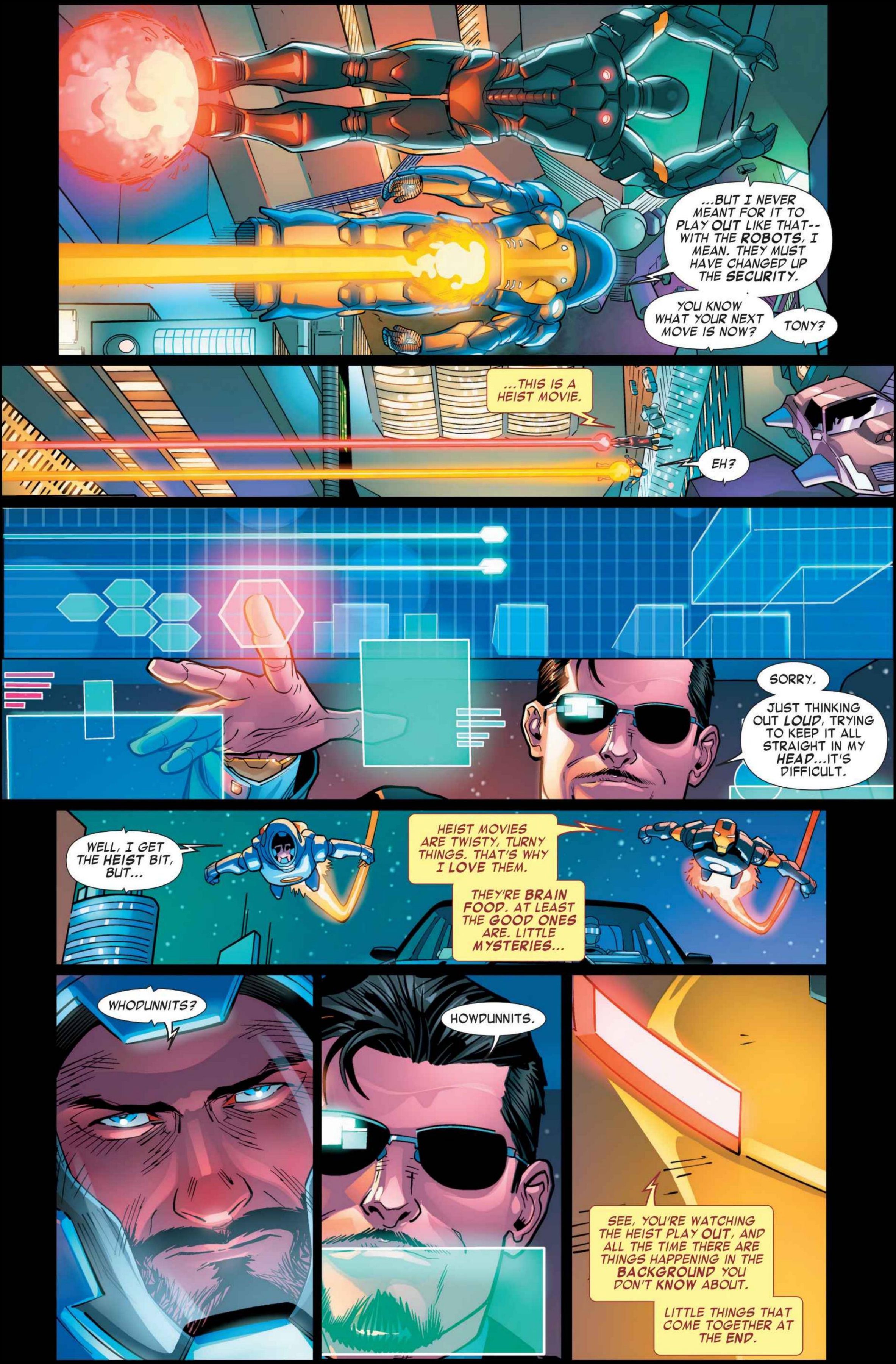

JUST THE DATA VAULT DOOR LEFT, TONY. ONCE WE'RE THROUGH HERE, THE MAINFRAME'S OURS FOR THE HACKING.
OF COURSE, THE SERVER-SIDE ENCRYPTIONS ON THE VAULT'S LOCK ARE SUPPOSEDLY IMPREGNABLE, SO--
OH YE OF LITTLE FAITH.
...
DOING ANYTHING AFTER THIS?
OKAY, YOU'VE GOT THE CRACKING TOOL I GAVE YOU-- CAN YOU DO THE HONORS?
I NEED TO CONCENTRATE FOR THIS PART...
GO AHEAD AND ENJOY YOURSELF, TONY.
I'VE GOT THIS.
THERE. GREEN LIGHT.
OPEN SESAME.
...
ELI?
REMEMBER HOW YOU SAID ALL THE HUMAN SECURITY THROUGH HERE WOULD BE DISTRACTED?
...YEAH?
BZAP
PZOW

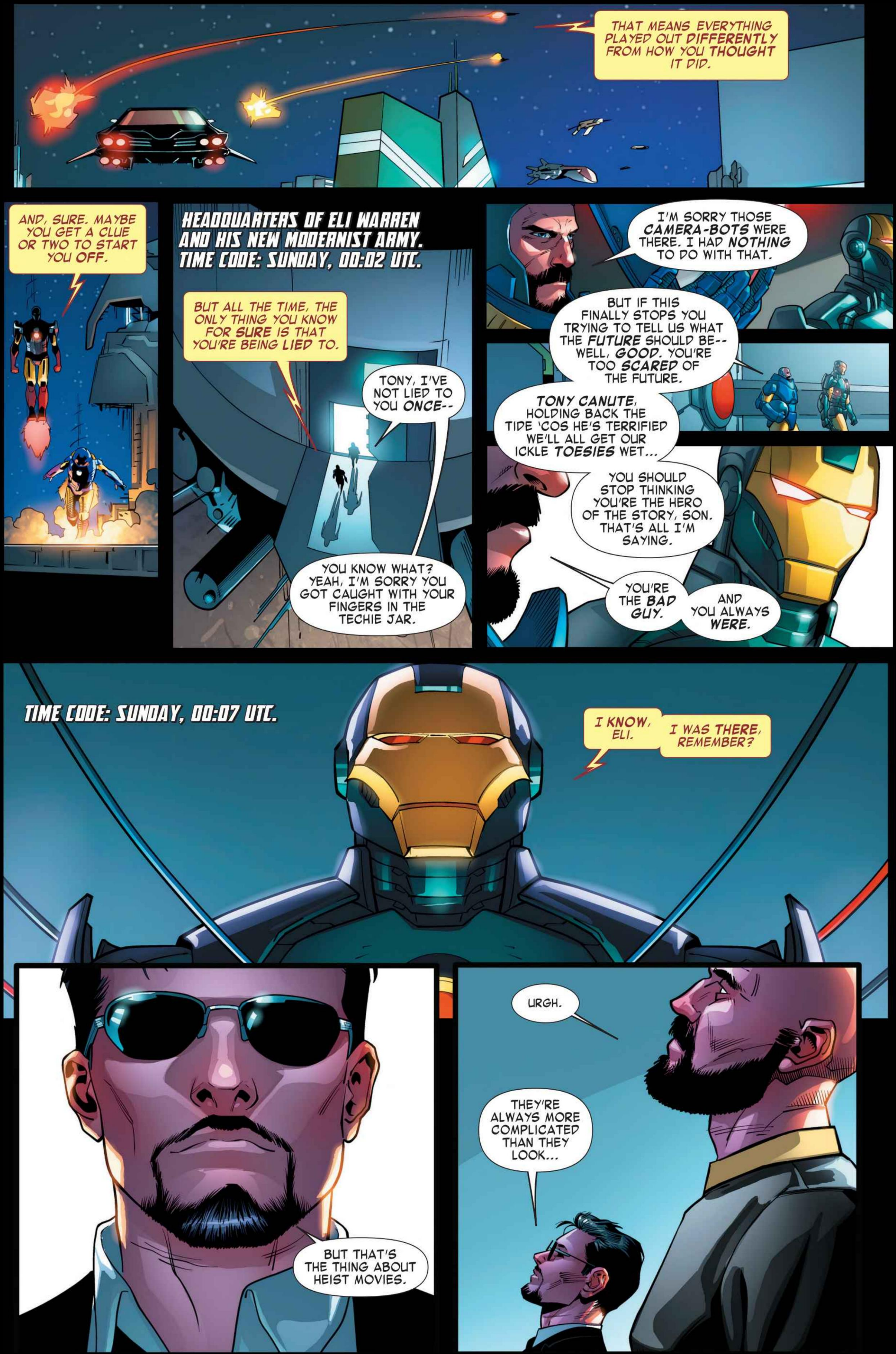

INTRUDERS IDENFITIED.
DEFEND. DETAIN. RECORD.
YOU WERE RIGHT.
IT'S THE "RECORD" BIT THAT WORRIES ME.
THEY'VE GOT CAMERAS ON THEM--
RECORD.
EVADE.
RECORD.
ELI-- CAREFUL--
DETAIN.
AAARRHH--!
AAARRHH--!
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:45 UTC.

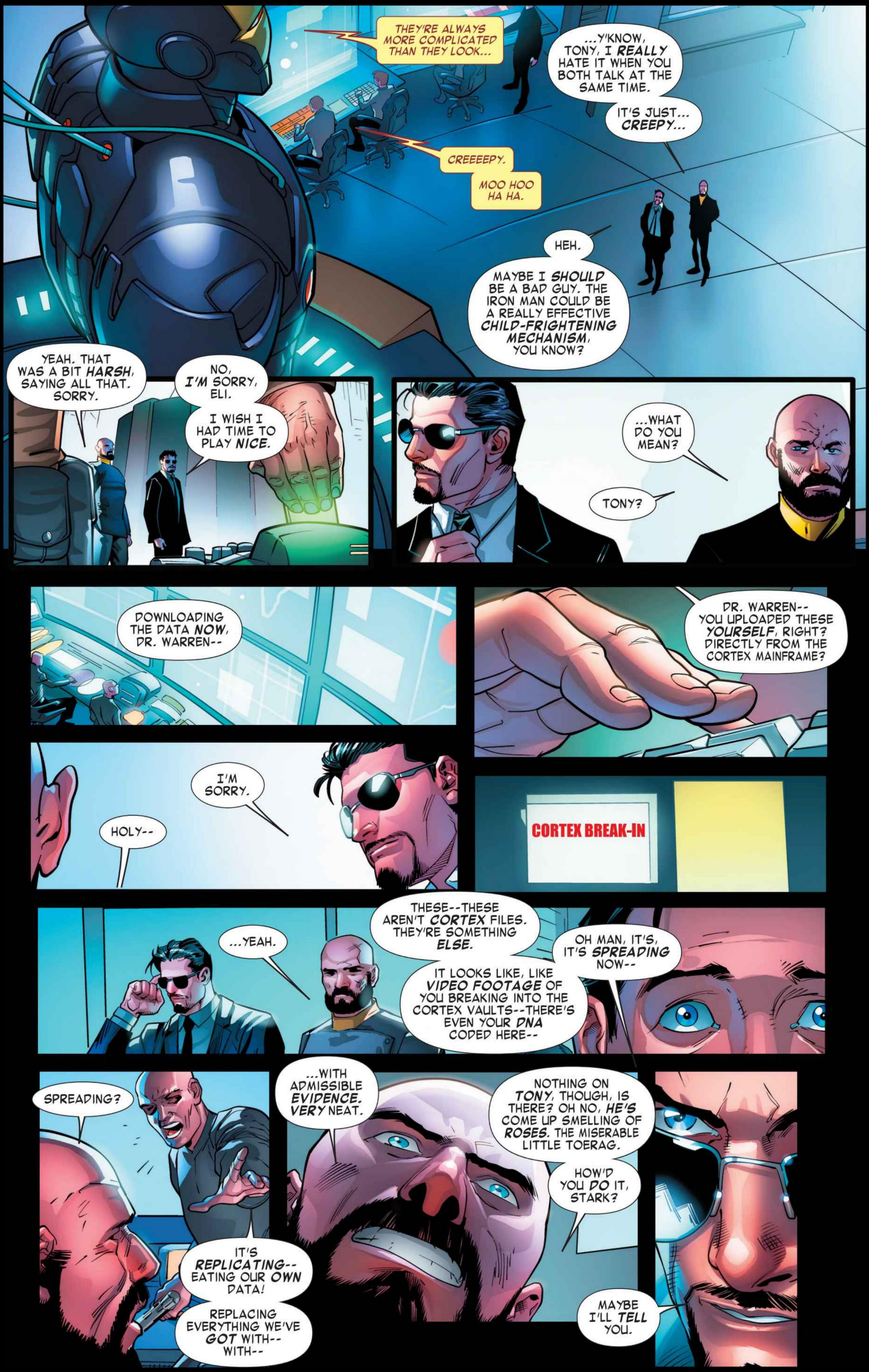

YOU CREEPY LITTLE SOD--
RECORD-- SQUUZZRRK!
YOU DO REALIZE WE'VE BEEN CAUGHT BANG TO RIGHTS--
WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER, ELI.
YOU'VE BEEN WOUNDED-- YOU COULD BLEED OUT IN YOUR SUIT--
OH YE OF--LITTLE FAITH--
I'M AN EXTREMIS ENHANCILE, REMEMBER? I'M HEALING UP ALREADY-- ALL PART OF THE PACKAGE.
FEELS A BIT WEIRD, MIND.
PAIN IN REVERSE...
I DON'T LIKE THAT SMOKE--
THAT'S THE SUIT SEALING ITSELF.
JUST NEEDS A MINUTE...
THERE. ALL DONE.
DETAIN.
YOU KNOW, I DON'T LIKE TO SAY IT, TONY--

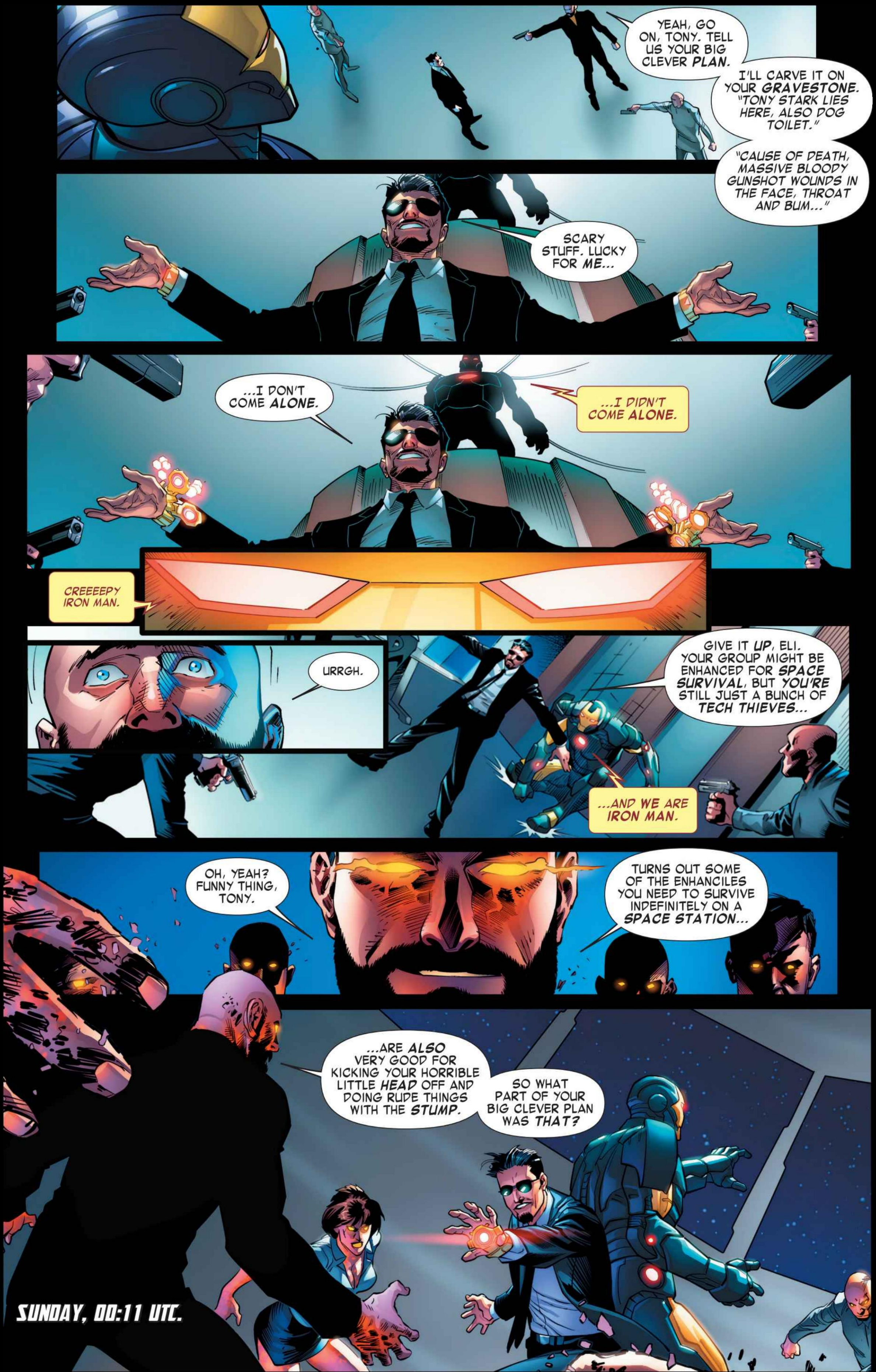

--BUT YOU'RE A BIT OFF YOUR GAME TONIGHT.
I'M DISAPPOINTED, STARK.
LET ME GUESS-- NNNH--
YOU THOUGHT I WAS BETTER THAN THIS--
YOU? NO. YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN YOU EVER WERE.
BUT I DID THINK YOU'D GOTTEN SMARTER.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:47 UTC
WELL.
WHAT CAN I SAY?
I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW.
BDAM
BUHKROOM
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT--
NO NEED TO CHUCK A ROBOT AT ME--

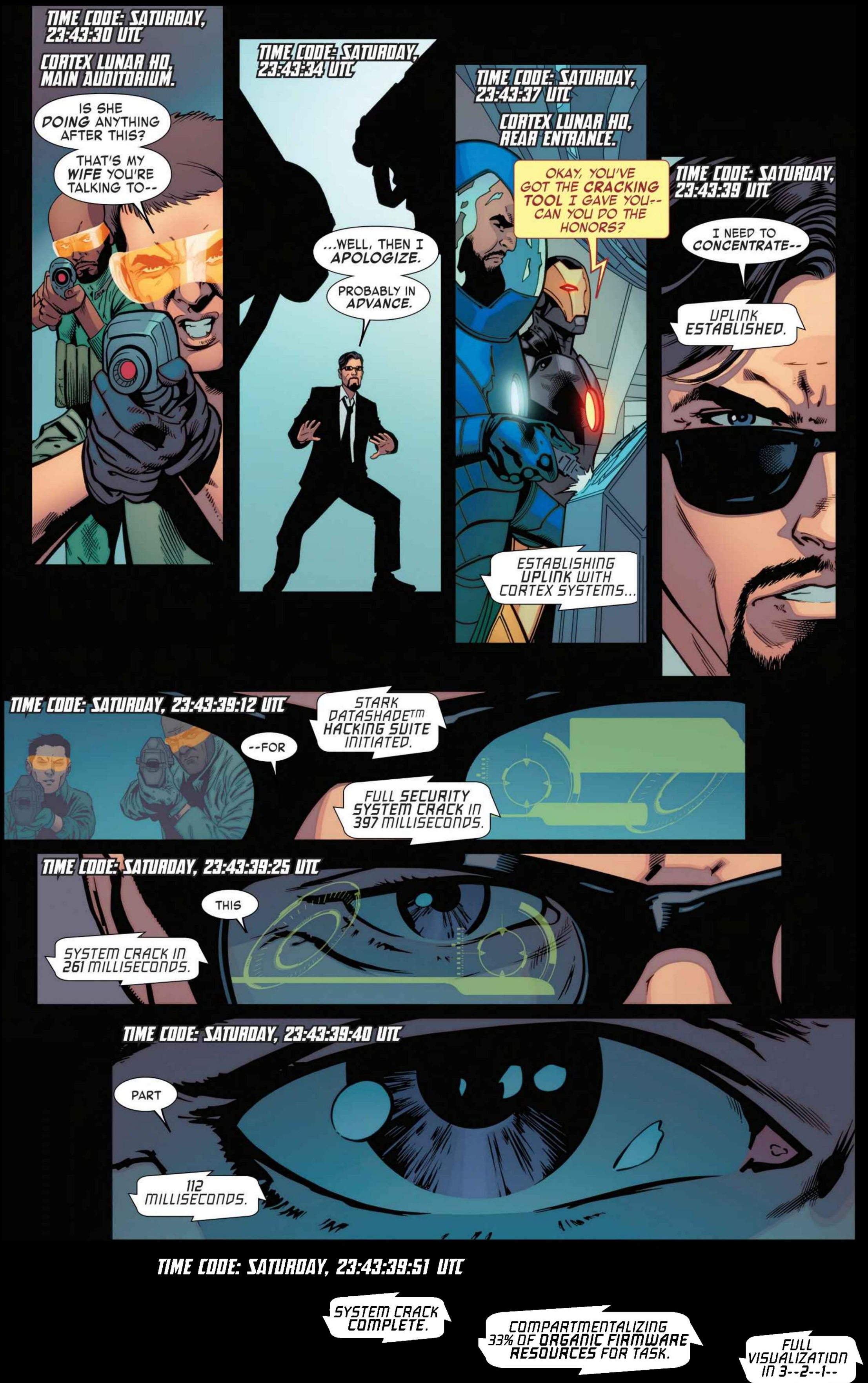

NO TIME FOR FINESSE, ELI.
I'M BUSY TRYING TO CONTAIN THIS--
I'LL WANT TO SEE SECURITY FOOTAGE FOR THE WHOLE BUILDING--
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN THERE, SON. I'VE GOT A SCHEDULE TO KEEP.
LET ME JUST SLIDE MY LITTLE SKELETON KEY IN HERE...
...AND WE'RE OFF TO THE RACES. ALL THE TECH I WANT OUT IN THE WORLD GETS COPIED OVER--
--IS THAT PLANS FOR A WORKING SPACE FARM? VERY TASTY--
--AND ALL THE TECH YOU WANT GONE...
...GETS GONE.
NO MORE TEXTILE™, SHERIFF.
THE TIDE STAYS OUT FOR ANOTHER DAY.
JUST DOING MY DUTY, FOLKS.
LISTEN, I'VE GOT ANOTHER APPOINTMENT, SO...
MISTER SIXTY? WE'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING...DISTURBING IN THE SECURITY FOOTAGE. IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WAS MORE THAN JUST A HEIST.
WELL, I KNEW THAT...
YES, SIR, BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO WAS BEHIND IT. UNTIL NOW.
LET'S DISCUSS THIS IN PRIVATE, JENKINS. I HAVE A FEELING WE MAY NEED TO TALK TO MISTER STARK LATER...
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:00 UTC.
OKAY. SHOULD BE SAFE TO LEAVE NOW...
YOU'LL WANT TO GET YOUR PEOPLE OFF THE MOON ASAP, ELI. GO TO GROUND.
IF THEY LET THEM DEPORT YOU, YOU WILL BE ARRESTED ON THE OTHER END.
WE'VE GOT PROTOCOLS IN PLACE FOR THIS, TONY. WE CAN BE BACK ON OUR ORBITAL STATION INSIDE SIX HOURS.
LISTEN...I KNOW WE'VE NOT ALWAYS SEEN EYE TO EYE...

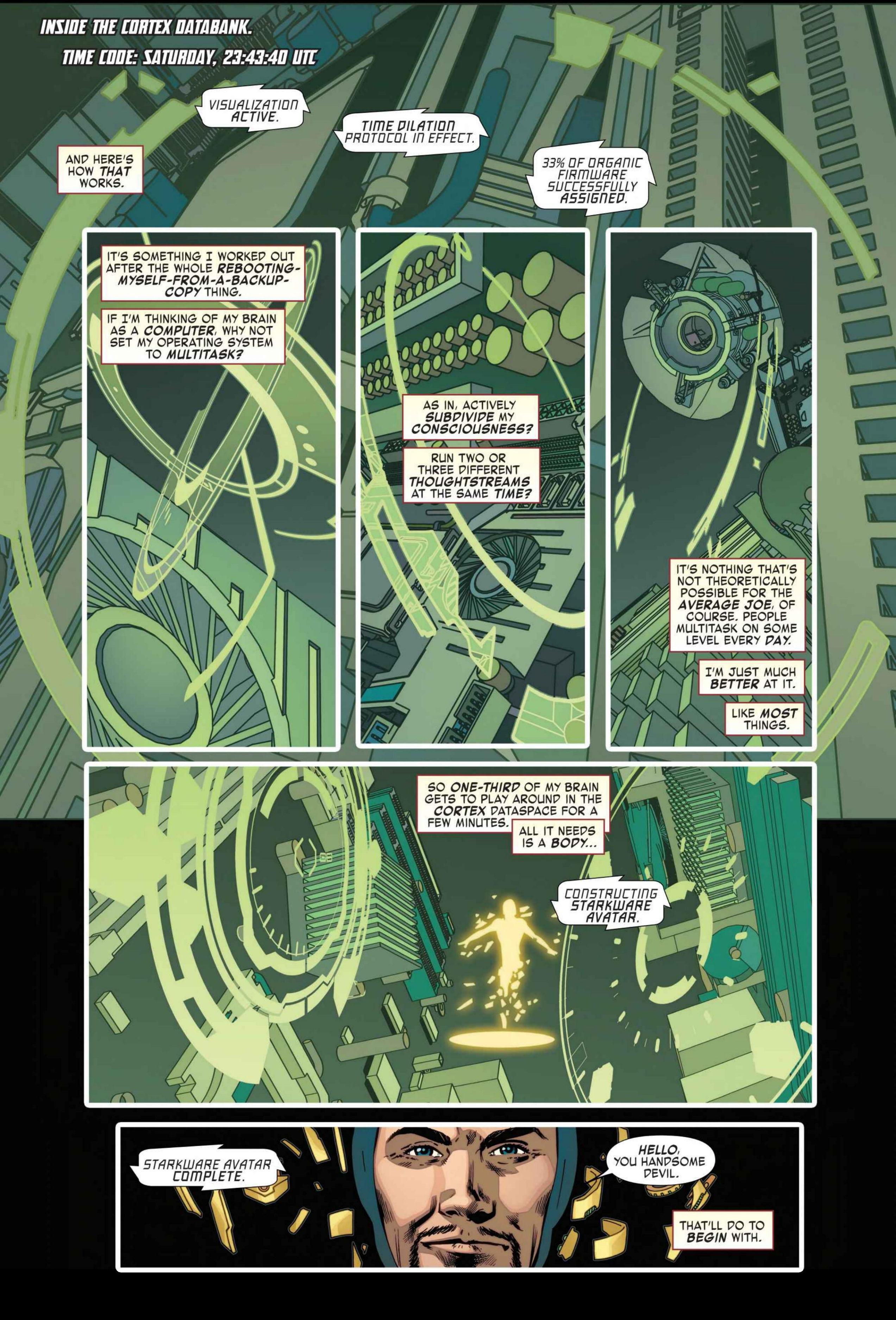

...BUT I NEVER MEANT FOR IT TO PLAY OUT LIKE THAT-- WITH THE ROBOTS, I MEAN. THEY MUST HAVE CHANGED UP THE SECURITY.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR NEXT MOVE IS NOW?
TONY?
...THIS IS A HEIST MOVIE.
EH?
SORRY.
JUST THINKING OUT LOUD, TRYING TO KEEP IT ALL STRAIGHT IN MY HEAD...IT'S DIFFICULT.
WELL, I GET THE HEIST BIT, BUT...
HEIST MOVIES ARE TWISTY, TURNY THINGS. THAT'S WHY I LOVE THEM.
THEY'RE BRAIN FOOD. AT LEAST THE GOOD ONES ARE. LITTLE MYSTERIES...
WHODUNNITS?
HOWDUNNITS.
SEE, YOU'RE WATCHING THE HEIST PLAY OUT, AND ALL THE TIME THERE ARE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE BACKGROUND YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT.
LITTLE THINGS THAT COME TOGETHER AT THE END.

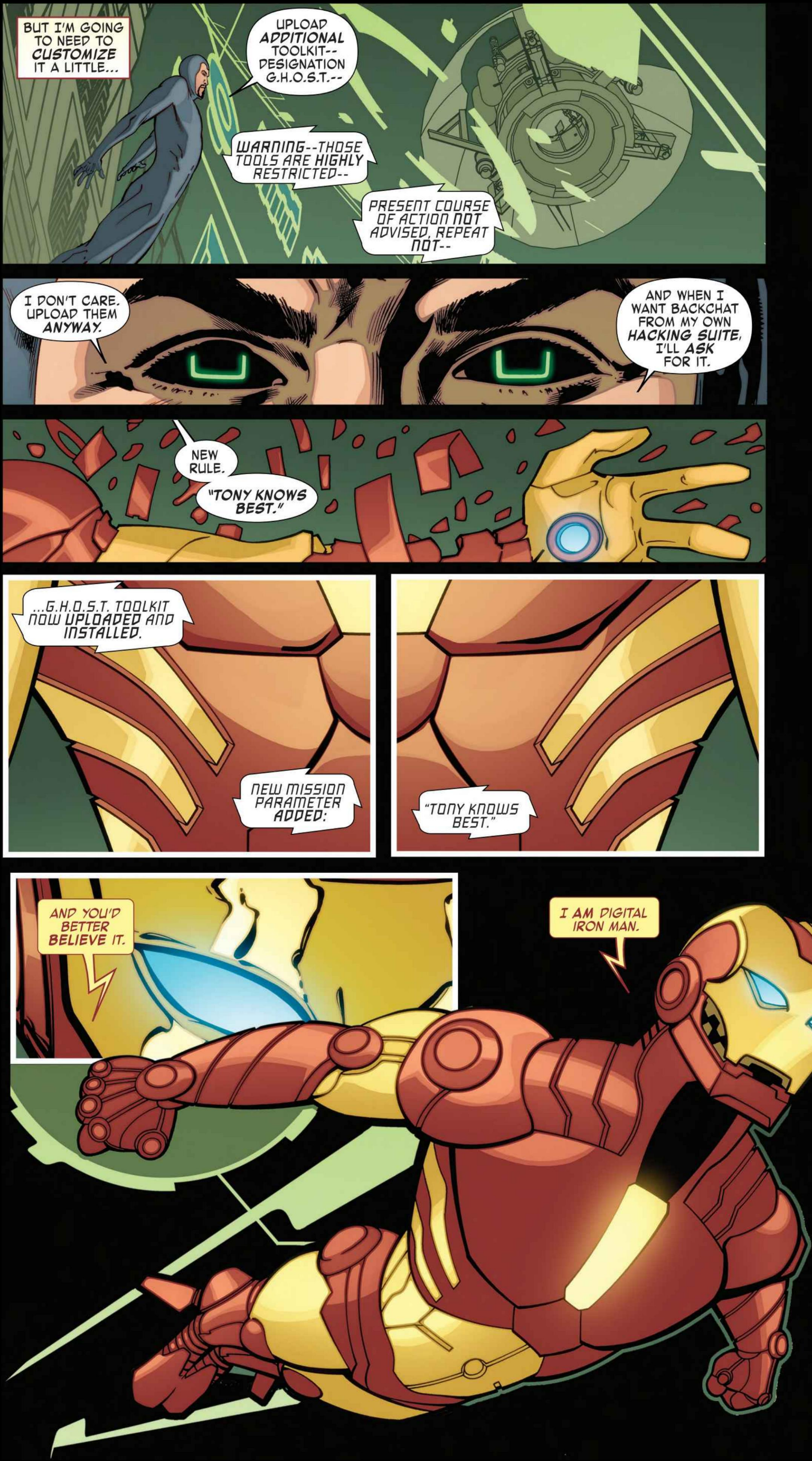

THAT MEANS EVERYTHING PLAYED OUT DIFFERENTLY FROM HOW YOU THOUGHT IT DID.
AND, SURE. MAYBE YOU GET A CLUE OR TWO TO START YOU OFF.
HEADQUARTERS OF ELI WARREN AND HIS NEW MODERNIST ARMY. TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:02 UTC.
BUT ALL THE TIME, THE ONLY THING YOU KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT YOU'RE BEING LIED TO.
TONY, I'VE NOT LIED TO YOU ONCE--
YOU KNOW WHAT? YEAH, I'M SORRY YOU GOT CAUGHT WITH YOUR FINGERS IN THE TECHIE JAR.
I'M SORRY THOSE CAMERA-BOTS WERE THERE. I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT.
BUT IF THIS FINALLY STOPS YOU TRYING TO TELL US WHAT THE FUTURE SHOULD BE--WELL, GOOD. YOU'RE TOO SCARED OF THE FUTURE.
TONY CANUTE, HOLDING BACK THE TIDE 'COS HE'S TERRIFIED WE'LL ALL GET OUR ICKLE TOESIES WET...
YOU SHOULD STOP THINKING YOU'RE THE HERO OF THE STORY, SON. THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING.
YOU'RE THE BAD GUY.
AND YOU ALWAYS WERE.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:07 UTC.
I KNOW, ELI.
I WAS THERE, REMEMBER?
BUT THAT'S THE THING ABOUT HEIST MOVIES.
URGH.
THEY'RE ALWAYS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THEY LOOK...

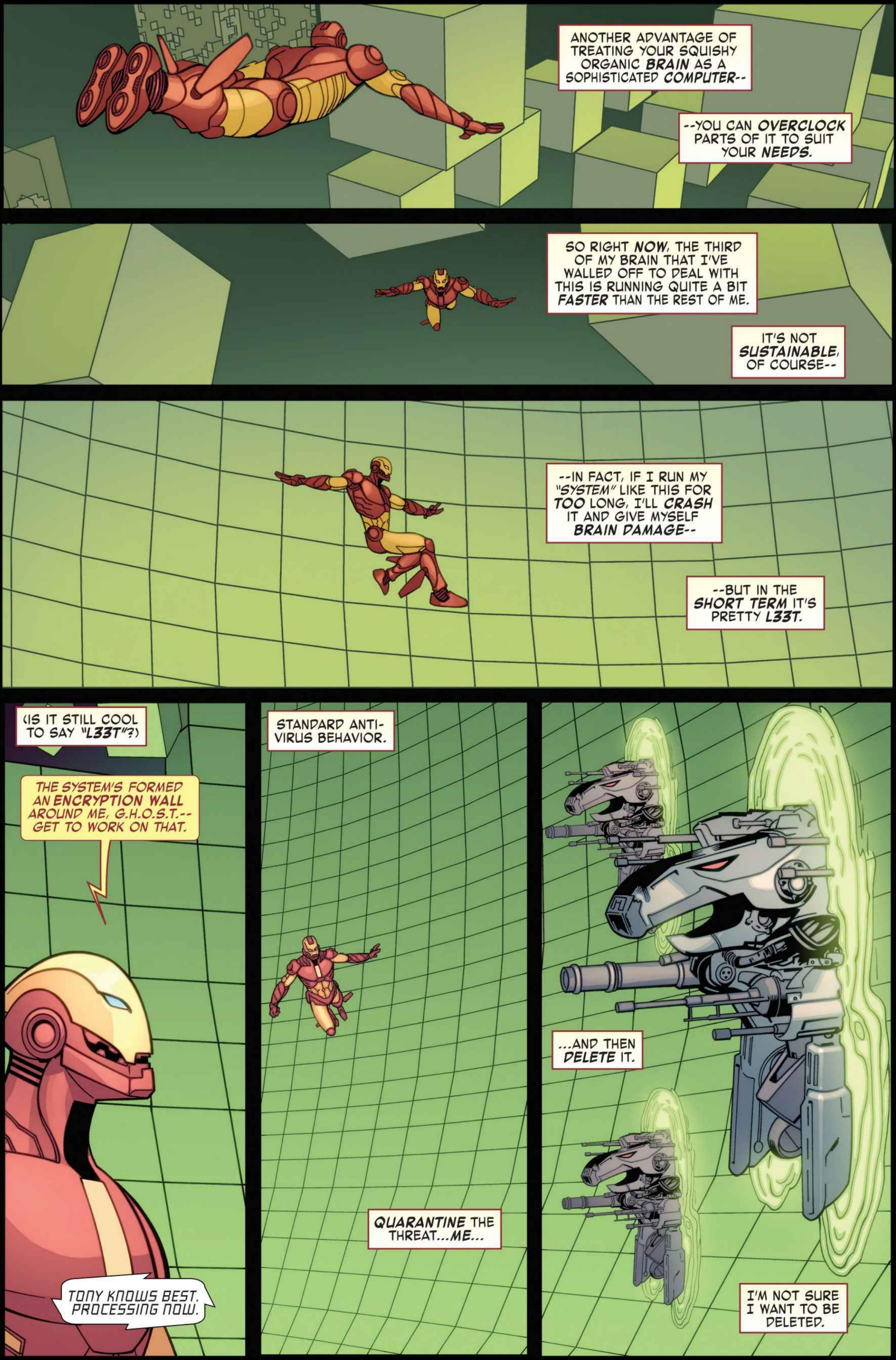

THEY'RE ALWAYS MORE COMPLICATED THAN THEY LOOK...
...Y'KNOW, TONY, I REALLY HATE IT WHEN YOU BOTH TALK AT THE SAME TIME.
IT'S JUST... CREEPY...
CREEEEPY.
MOO HOO HA HA.
HEH.
MAYBE I SHOULD BE A BAD GUY. THE IRON MAN COULD BE A REALLY EFFECTIVE CHILD-FRIGHTENING MECHANISM, YOU KNOW?
YEAH. THAT WAS A BIT HARSH, SAYING ALL THAT. SORRY.
NO, I'M SORRY, ELI.
I WISH I HAD TIME TO PLAY NICE.
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
TONY?
DOWNLOADING THE DATA NOW, DR. WARREN--
DR. WARREN-- YOU UPLOADED THESE YOURSELF, RIGHT? DIRECTLY FROM THE CORTEX MAINFRAME?
I'M SORRY.
HOLY--
CORTEX BREAK-IN
THESE--THESE AREN'T CORTEX FILES. THEY'RE SOMETHING ELSE.
IT LOOKS LIKE, LIKE VIDEO FOOTAGE OF YOU BREAKING INTO THE CORTEX VAULTS--THERE'S EVEN YOUR DNA CODED HERE--
...YEAH.
OH MAN, IT'S, IT'S SPREADING NOW--
SPREADING?
IT'S REPLICATING-- EATING OUR OWN DATA!
REPLACING EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT WITH-- WITH--
...WITH ADMISSIBLE EVIDENCE. VERY NEAT.
NOTHING ON TONY, THOUGH, IS THERE? OH NO, HE'S COME UP SMELLING OF ROSES. THE MISERABLE LITTLE TOERAG.
HOW'D YOU DO IT, STARK?
MAYBE I'LL TELL YOU.

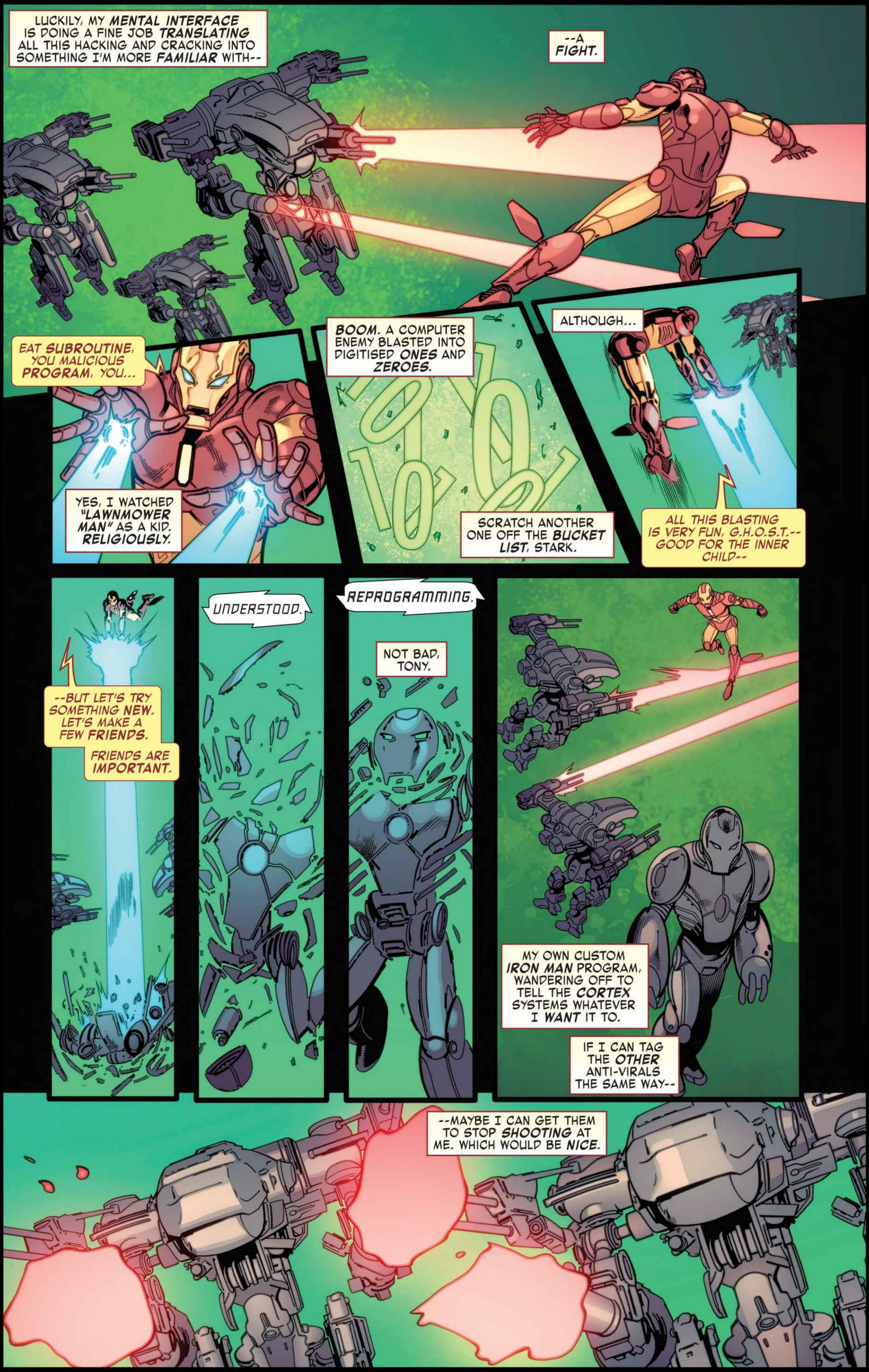

YEAH, GO ON, TONY. TELL US YOUR BIG CLEVER PLAN.
I'LL CARVE IT ON YOUR GRAVESTONE. "TONY STARK LIES HERE, ALSO DOG TOILET."
"CAUSE OF DEATH, MASSIVE BLOODY GUNSHOT WOUNDS IN THE FACE, THROAT AND BUM..."
SCARY STUFF. LUCKY FOR ME...
...I DON'T COME ALONE.
...I DIDN'T COME ALONE.
CREEEEPY IRON MAN.
URRGH.
GIVE IT UP, ELI. YOUR GROUP MIGHT BE ENHANCED FOR SPACE SURVIVAL, BUT YOU'RE STILL JUST A BUNCH OF TECH THIEVES...
...AND WE ARE IRON MAN.
OH, YEAH? FUNNY THING, TONY.
TURNS OUT SOME OF THE ENHANCILES YOU NEED TO SURVIVE INDEFINITELY ON A SPACE STATION...
...ARE ALSO VERY GOOD FOR KICKING YOUR HORRIBLE LITTLE HEAD OFF AND DOING RUDE THINGS WITH THE STUMP.
SO WHAT PART OF YOUR BIG CLEVER PLAN WAS THAT?
SUNDAY, 00:11 UTC.

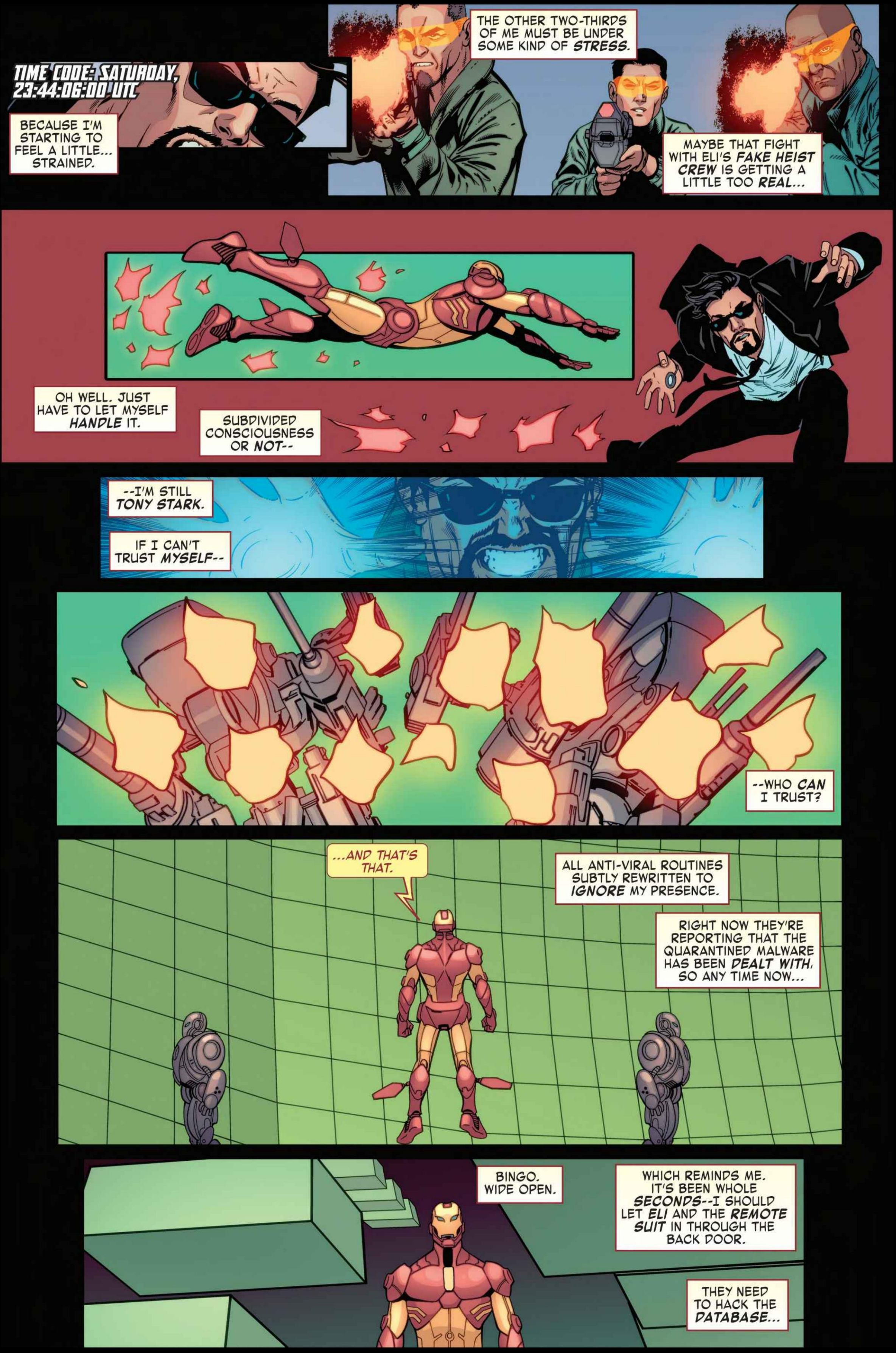

TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:30 UTC
CORTEX LUNAR HQ, MAIN AUDITORIUM.
IS SHE *DOING* ANYTHING AFTER THIS?
THAT'S MY *WIFE* YOU'RE TALKING TO--
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:34 UTC
...WELL, THEN I *APOLOGIZE.*
PROBABLY IN *ADVANCE.*
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:37 UTC
CORTEX LUNAR HQ, REAR ENTRANCE.
OKAY, YOU'VE GOT THE **CRACKING TOOL** I GAVE YOU-- CAN YOU DO THE HONORS?
ESTABLISHING **UPLINK** WITH CORTEX SYSTEMS...
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:39 UTC
I NEED TO **CONCENTRATE--**
UPLINK **ESTABLISHED.**
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:39:12 UTC
--FOR
STARK DATASHADE™ **HACKING SUITE** INITIATED.
FULL **SECURITY SYSTEM CRACK** IN **397** MILLISECONDS.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:39:25 UTC
THIS
SYSTEM CRACK IN **261** MILLISECONDS.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:39:40 UTC
PART
112 MILLISECONDS.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:39:51 UTC
SYSTEM CRACK **COMPLETE.**
COMPARTMENTALIZING 33% OF **ORGANIC FIRMWARE RESOURCES** FOR TASK.
FULL VISUALIZATION IN 3--2--1--

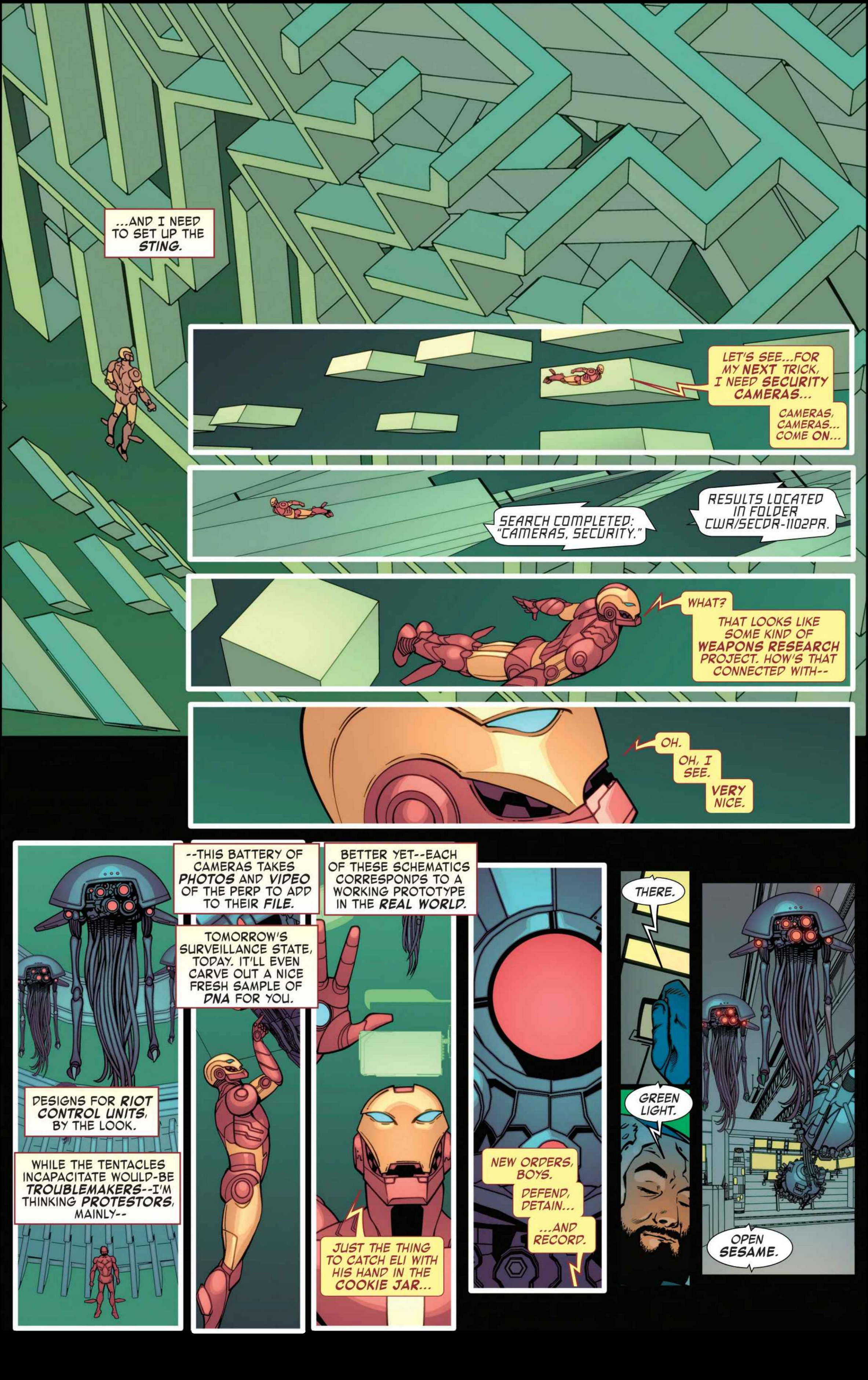

INSIDE THE CORTEX DATABANK.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:43:40 UTC
VISUALIZATION ACTIVE.
AND HERE'S HOW *THAT* WORKS.
TIME DILATION PROTOCOL IN EFFECT.
33% OF ORGANIC FIRMWARE SUCCESSFULLY *ASSIGNED*.
IT'S SOMETHING I WORKED OUT AFTER THE WHOLE *REBOOTING-MYSELF-FROM-A-BACKUP-COPY* THING.
IF I'M THINKING OF MY BRAIN AS A *COMPUTER*, WHY NOT SET MY OPERATING SYSTEM TO *MULTITASK?*
AS IN, ACTIVELY *SUBDIVIDE* MY *CONSCIOUSNESS?*
RUN TWO OR THREE DIFFERENT *THOUGHTSTREAMS* AT THE SAME *TIME?*
IT'S NOTHING THAT'S NOT THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE FOR THE *AVERAGE JOE*, OF COURSE. PEOPLE MULTITASK ON SOME LEVEL EVERY *DAY*.
I'M JUST MUCH *BETTER* AT IT.
LIKE *MOST* THINGS.
SO *ONE-THIRD* OF MY BRAIN GETS TO PLAY AROUND IN THE *CORTEX* DATASPACE FOR A FEW MINUTES.
ALL IT NEEDS IS A *BODY*...
CONSTRUCTING *STARKWARE AVATAR*.
STARKWARE AVATAR *COMPLETE*.
HELLO, YOU HANDSOME DEVIL.
THAT'LL DO TO *BEGIN* WITH.

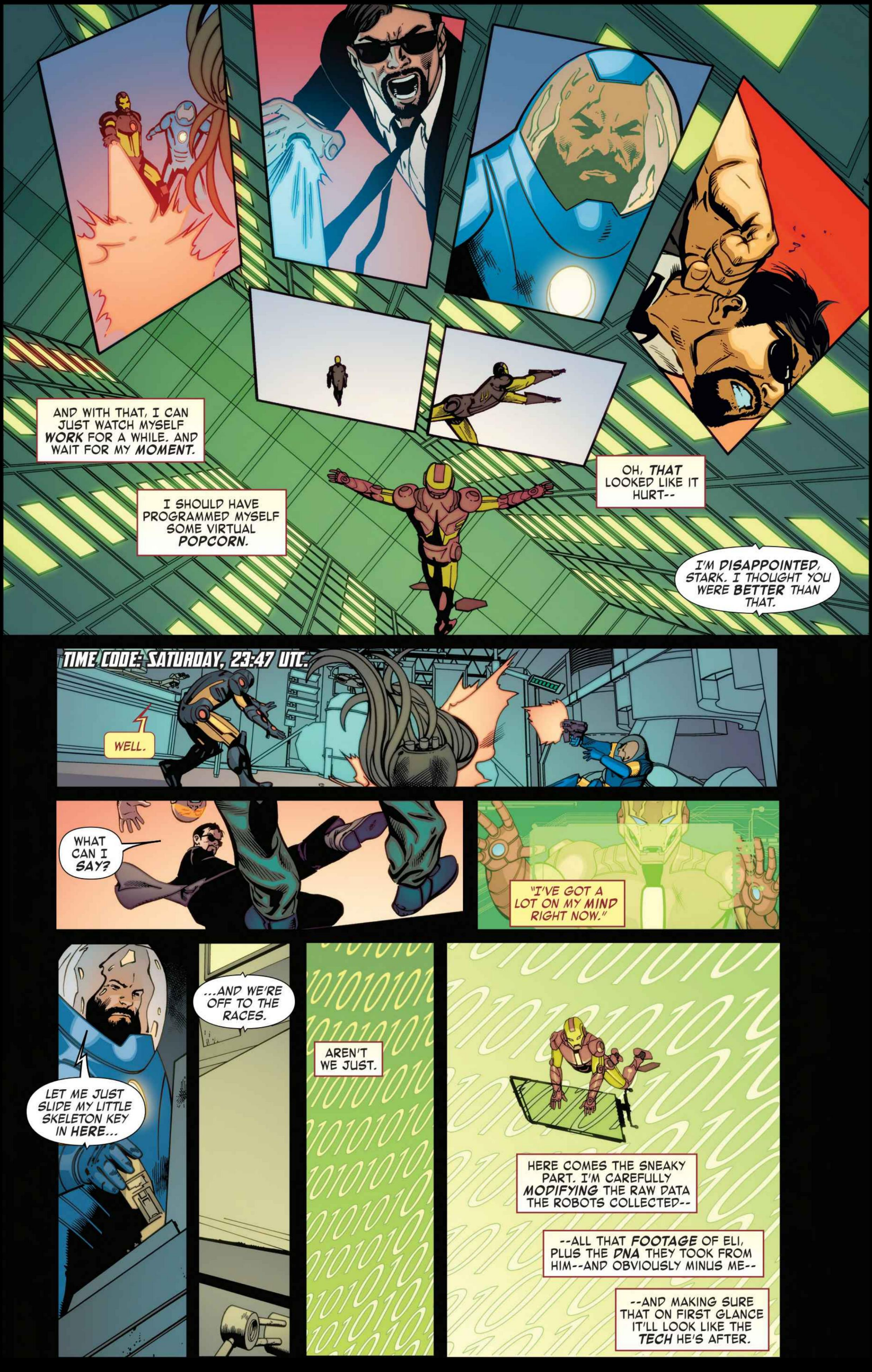

BUT I'M GOING TO NEED TO CUSTOMIZE IT A LITTLE...
UPLOAD ADDITIONAL TOOLKIT--DESIGNATION G.H.O.S.T.--
WARNING--THOSE TOOLS ARE HIGHLY RESTRICTED--
PRESENT COURSE OF ACTION NOT ADVISED, REPEAT NOT--
I DON'T CARE. UPLOAD THEM ANYWAY.
AND WHEN I WANT BACKCHAT FROM MY OWN HACKING SUITE, I'LL ASK FOR IT.
NEW RULE.
"TONY KNOWS BEST."
...G.H.O.S.T. TOOLKIT NOW UPLOADED AND INSTALLED.
NEW MISSION PARAMETER ADDED:
"TONY KNOWS BEST."
AND YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT.
I AM DIGITAL IRON MAN.

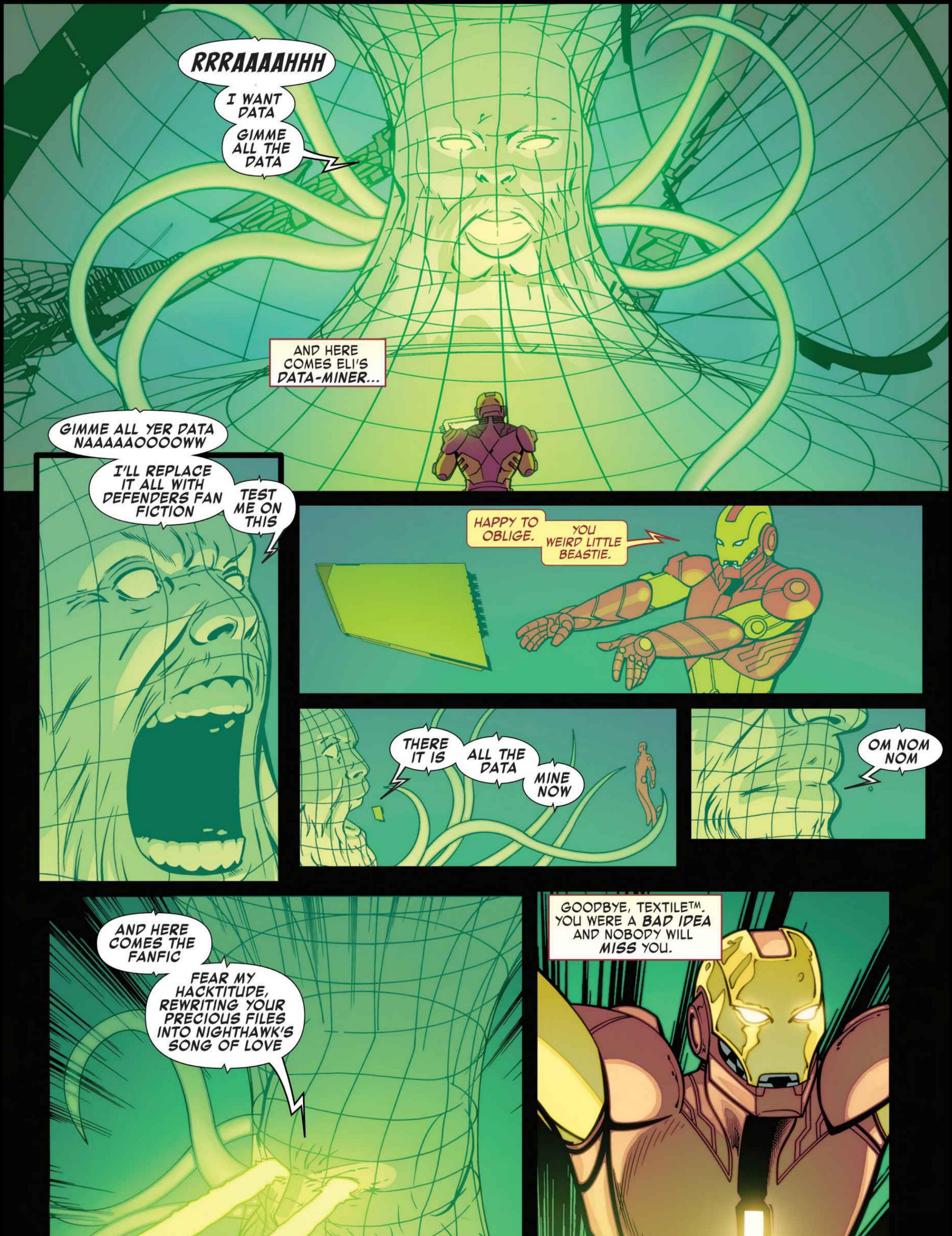

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE OF TREATING YOUR SQUISHY ORGANIC **BRAIN** AS A SOPHISTICATED **COMPUTER**--
--YOU CAN **OVERCLOCK** PARTS OF IT TO SUIT YOUR **NEEDS.**
SO RIGHT **NOW**, THE THIRD OF MY BRAIN THAT I'VE WALLED OFF TO DEAL WITH THIS IS RUNNING QUITE A BIT **FASTER** THAN THE REST OF ME.
IT'S NOT **SUSTAINABLE**, OF COURSE--
--IN FACT, IF I RUN MY *"SYSTEM"* LIKE THIS FOR **TOO** LONG, I'LL **CRASH** IT AND GIVE MYSELF **BRAIN DAMAGE**--
--BUT IN THE **SHORT TERM** IT'S PRETTY **L33T.**
(IS IT STILL COOL TO SAY "**L33T**"?)
THE SYSTEM'S FORMED AN ***ENCRYPTION WALL*** *AROUND ME, G.H.O.S.T.-- GET TO WORK ON THAT.*
TONY KNOWS BEST. PROCESSING NOW.
STANDARD ANTI-VIRUS BEHAVIOR.
QUARANTINE THE THREAT...***ME...***
...AND THEN ***DELETE*** IT.
I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO BE DELETED.

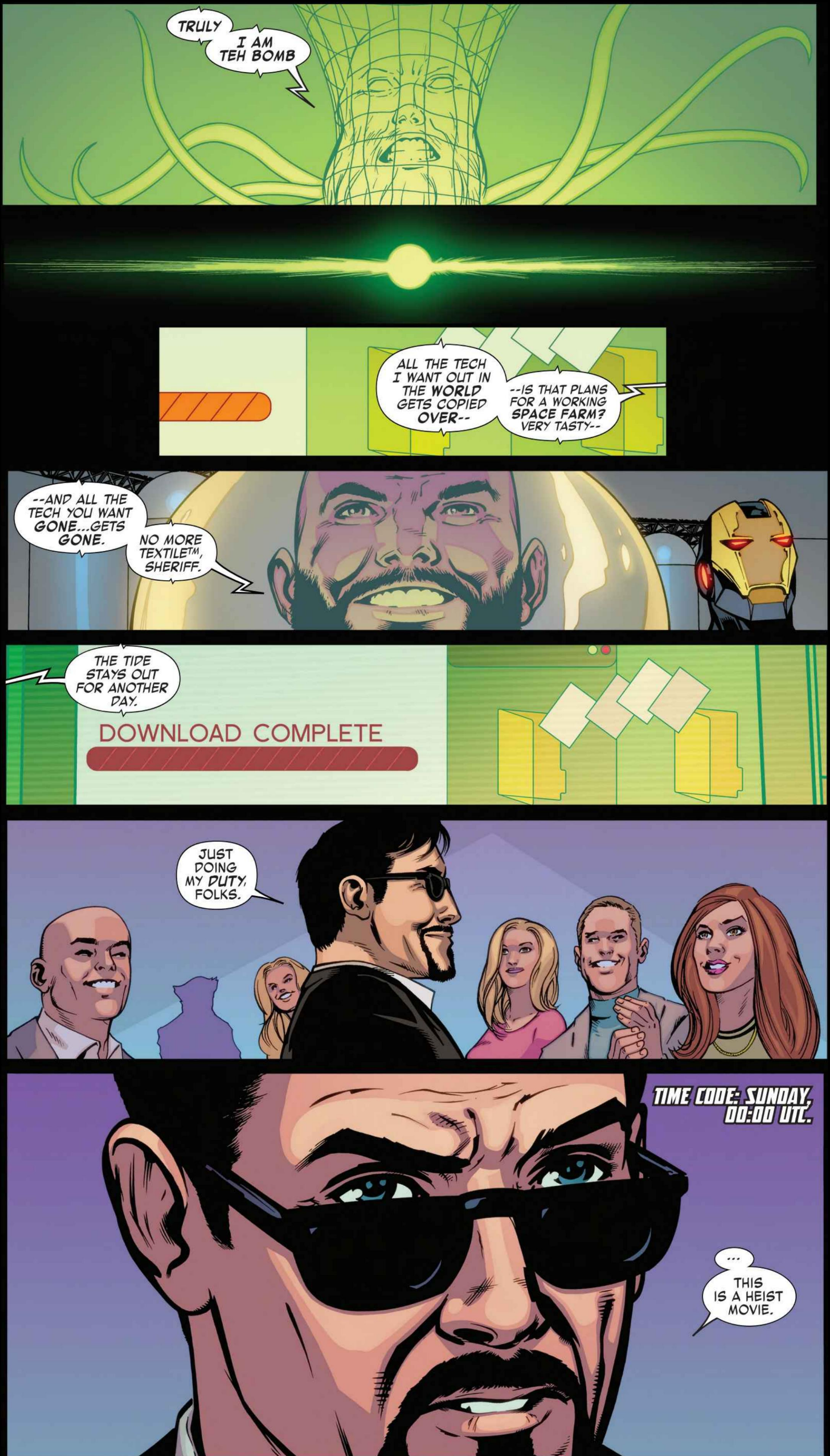

LUCKILY, MY MENTAL INTERFACE IS DOING A FINE JOB TRANSLATING ALL THIS HACKING AND CRACKING INTO SOMETHING I'M MORE FAMILIAR WITH--
--A FIGHT.
EAT SUBROUTINE, YOU MALICIOUS PROGRAM, YOU...
YES, I WATCHED "LAWNMOWER MAN" AS A KID. RELIGIOUSLY.
BOOM. A COMPUTER ENEMY BLASTED INTO DIGITISED ONES AND ZEROES.
SCRATCH ANOTHER ONE OFF THE BUCKET LIST, STARK.
ALTHOUGH...
ALL THIS BLASTING IS VERY FUN, G.H.O.S.T.-- GOOD FOR THE INNER CHILD--
--BUT LET'S TRY SOMETHING NEW. LET'S MAKE A FEW FRIENDS.
FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT.
UNDERSTOOD.
REPROGRAMMING.
NOT BAD, TONY.
MY OWN CUSTOM IRON MAN PROGRAM, WANDERING OFF TO TELL THE CORTEX SYSTEMS WHATEVER I WANT IT TO.
IF I CAN TAG THE OTHER ANTI-VIRALS THE SAME WAY--
--MAYBE I CAN GET THEM TO STOP SHOOTING AT ME. WHICH WOULD BE NICE.

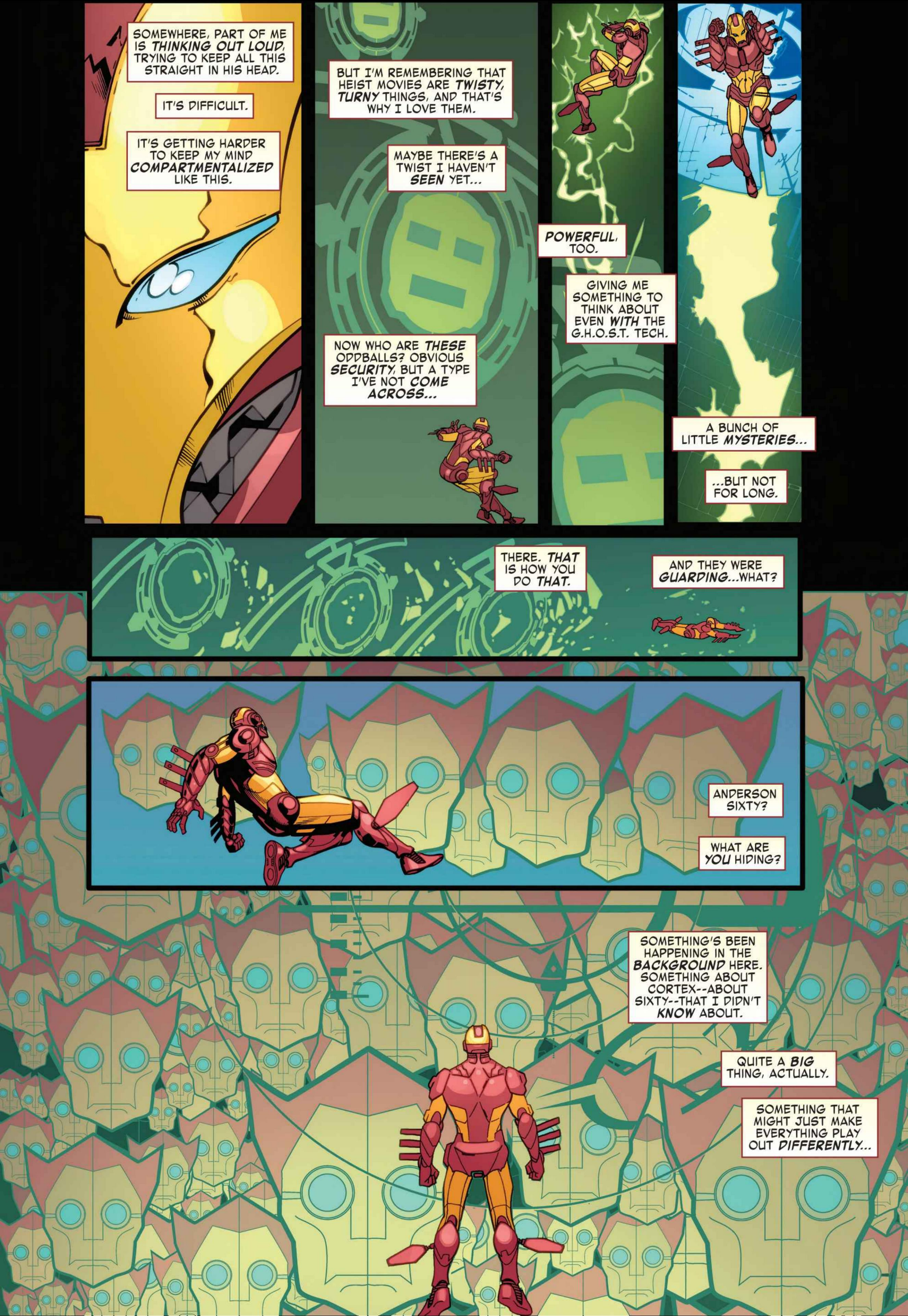

TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:44:06:00 UTC
BECAUSE I'M STARTING TO FEEL A LITTLE... STRAINED.
THE OTHER TWO-THIRDS OF ME MUST BE UNDER SOME KIND OF STRESS.
MAYBE THAT FIGHT WITH ELI'S FAKE HEIST CREW IS GETTING A LITTLE TOO REAL...
OH WELL. JUST HAVE TO LET MYSELF HANDLE IT.
SUBDIVIDED CONSCIOUSNESS OR NOT--
--I'M STILL TONY STARK.
IF I CAN'T TRUST MYSELF--
--WHO CAN I TRUST?
...AND THAT'S THAT.
ALL ANTI-VIRAL ROUTINES SUBTLY REWRITTEN TO IGNORE MY PRESENCE.
RIGHT NOW THEY'RE REPORTING THAT THE QUARANTINED MALWARE HAS BEEN DEALT WITH, SO ANY TIME NOW...
BINGO. WIDE OPEN.
WHICH REMINDS ME. IT'S BEEN WHOLE SECONDS--I SHOULD LET ELI AND THE REMOTE SUIT IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.
THEY NEED TO HACK THE DATABASE...

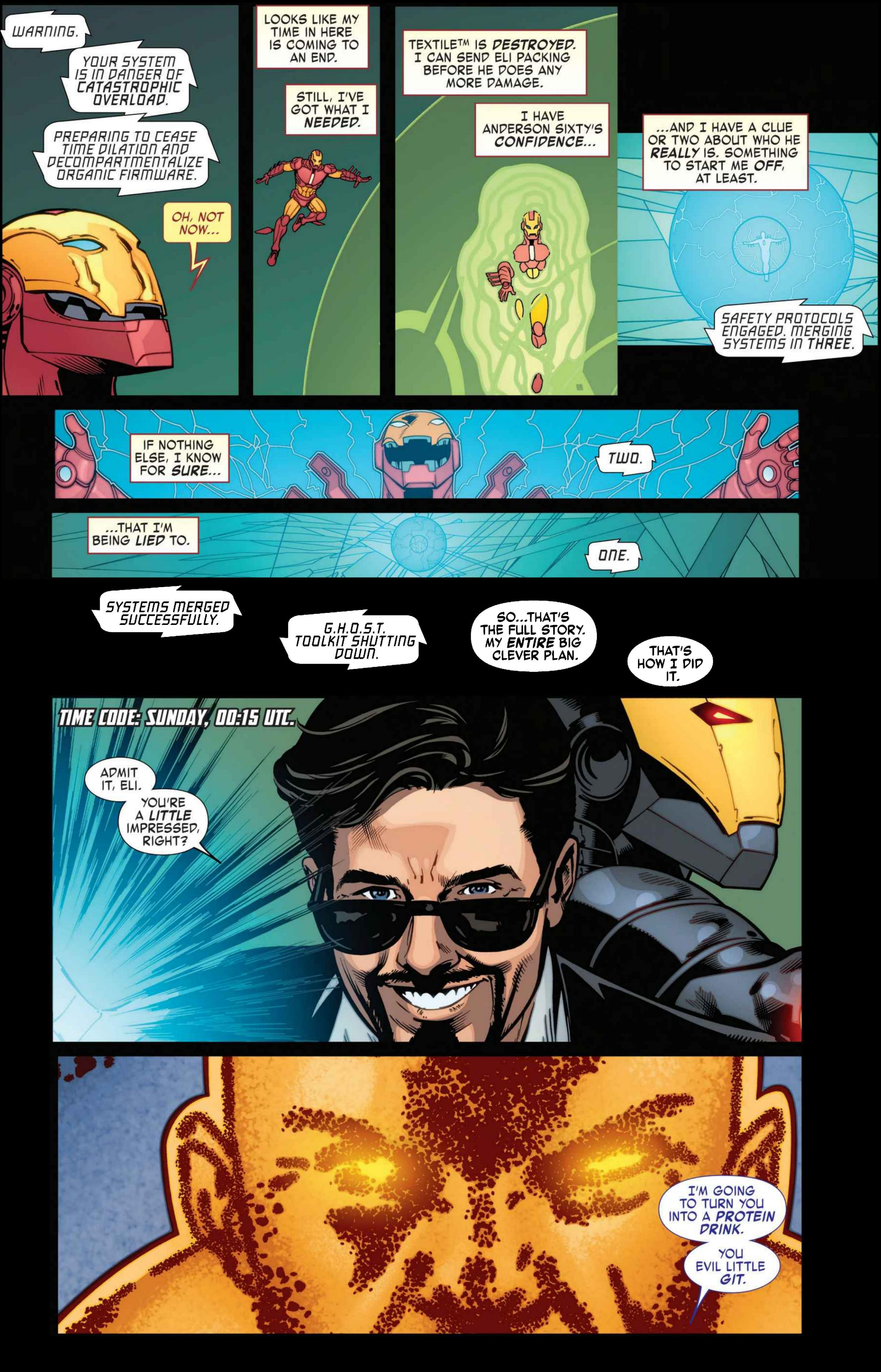

...AND I NEED TO SET UP THE STING.
LET'S SEE...FOR MY NEXT TRICK, I NEED SECURITY CAMERAS...
CAMERAS, CAMERAS... COME ON...
SEARCH COMPLETED: "CAMERAS, SECURITY."
RESULTS LOCATED IN FOLDER CWR/SECDR-1102PR.
WHAT?
THAT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF WEAPONS RESEARCH PROJECT. HOW'S THAT CONNECTED WITH--
OH.
OH, I SEE.
VERY NICE.
DESIGNS FOR RIOT CONTROL UNITS, BY THE LOOK.
WHILE THE TENTACLES INCAPACITATE WOULD-BE TROUBLEMAKERS--I'M THINKING PROTESTORS, MAINLY--
--THIS BATTERY OF CAMERAS TAKES PHOTOS AND VIDEO OF THE PERP TO ADD TO THEIR FILE.
TOMORROW'S SURVEILLANCE STATE, TODAY. IT'LL EVEN CARVE OUT A NICE FRESH SAMPLE OF DNA FOR YOU.
BETTER YET--EACH OF THESE SCHEMATICS CORRESPONDS TO A WORKING PROTOTYPE IN THE REAL WORLD.
JUST THE THING TO CATCH ELI WITH HIS HAND IN THE COOKIE JAR...
NEW ORDERS, BOYS.
DEFEND, DETAIN...
...AND RECORD.
THERE.
GREEN LIGHT.
OPEN SESAME.

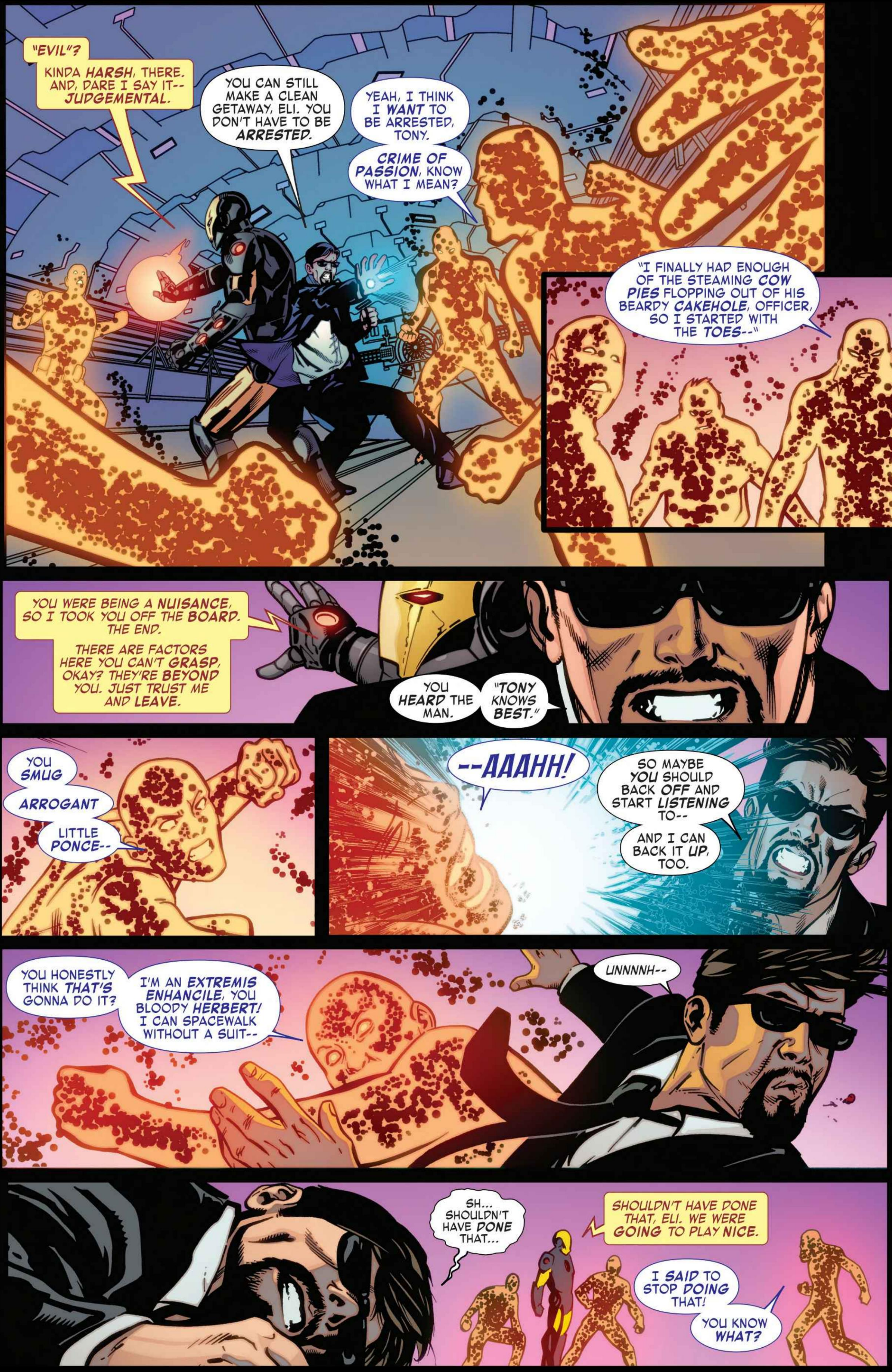

AND WITH THAT, I CAN JUST WATCH MYSELF *WORK* FOR A WHILE. AND WAIT FOR MY *MOMENT.*
I SHOULD HAVE PROGRAMMED MYSELF SOME VIRTUAL *POPCORN.*
OH, *THAT* LOOKED LIKE IT HURT--
I'M DISAPPOINTED, STARK. I THOUGHT YOU WERE *BETTER* THAN THAT.
TIME CODE: SATURDAY, 23:47 UTC.
WELL.
WHAT CAN I *SAY?*
"I'VE GOT A LOT ON MY MIND RIGHT NOW."
LET ME JUST SLIDE MY LITTLE SKELETON KEY IN *HERE*...
...AND WE'RE OFF TO THE RACES.
AREN'T WE JUST.
HERE COMES THE SNEAKY PART. I'M CAREFULLY *MODIFYING* THE RAW DATA THE ROBOTS COLLECTED--
--ALL THAT *FOOTAGE* OF ELI, PLUS THE *DNA* THEY TOOK FROM HIM--AND OBVIOUSLY MINUS ME--
--AND MAKING SURE THAT ON FIRST GLANCE IT'LL LOOK LIKE THE *TECH* HE'S AFTER.

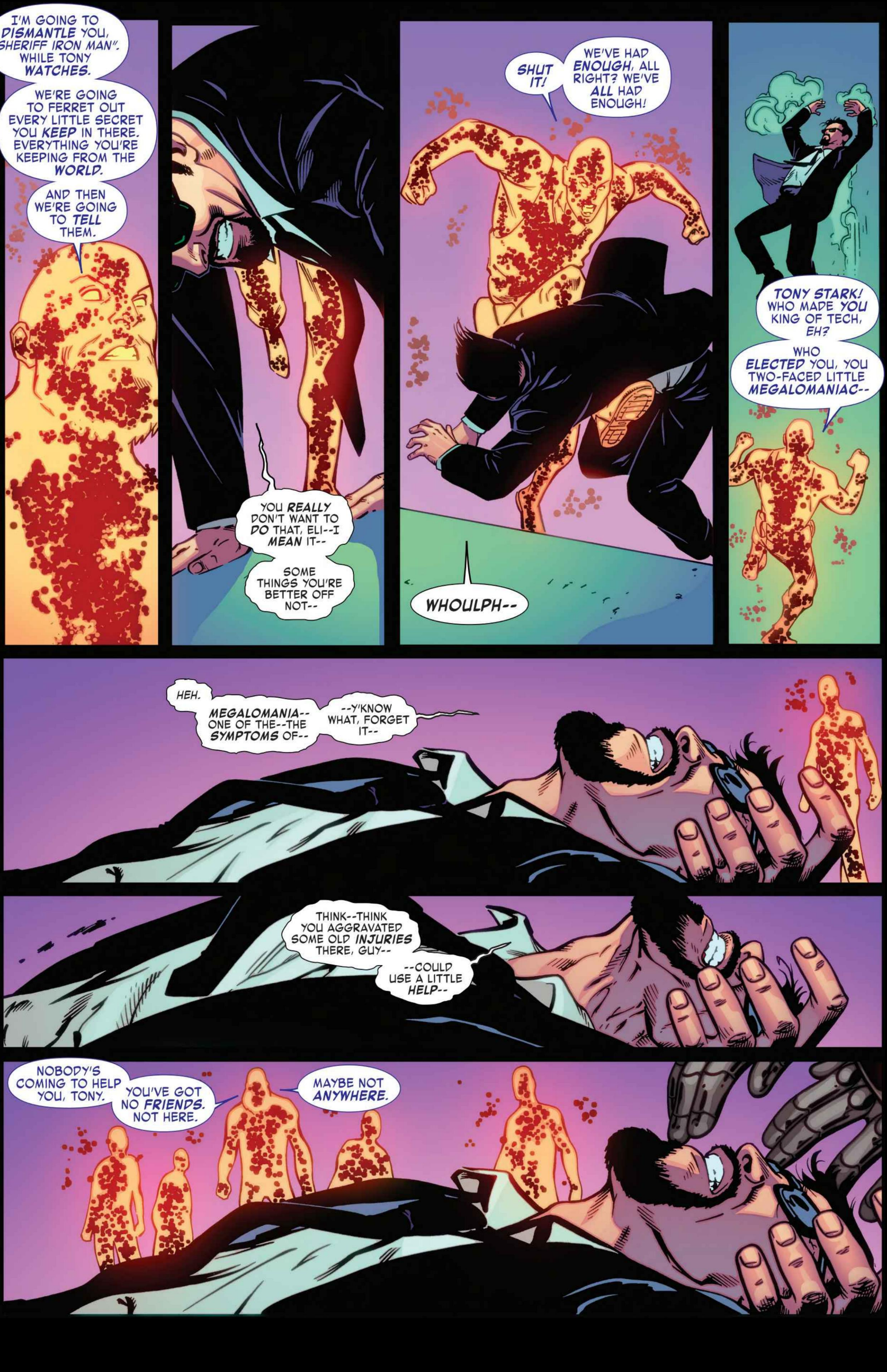

RRRAAAAHHH
I WANT DATA
GIMME ALL THE DATA
AND HERE COMES ELI'S DATA-MINER...
GIMME ALL YER DATA NAAAAAOOOOWW
I'LL REPLACE IT ALL WITH DEFENDERS FAN FICTION
TEST ME ON THIS
HAPPY TO OBLIGE.
YOU WEIRD LITTLE BEASTIE.
THERE IT IS
ALL THE DATA
MINE NOW
OM NOM NOM
AND HERE COMES THE FANFIC
FEAR MY HACKTITUDE, REWRITING YOUR PRECIOUS FILES INTO NIGHTHAWK'S SONG OF LOVE
IT'S GOTTEN TO THE SECOND PART OF ITS PROGRAM--THE DESTRUCTIVE PART. TIME I WASN'T HERE.
GOODBYE, TEXTILE™. YOU WERE A BAD IDEA AND NOBODY WILL MISS YOU.
AND HELLO, SEVERAL THOUSAND eBOOKS' WORTH OF C-LIST HURT/COMFORT EPICS.
YOU, I WON'T JUDGE.

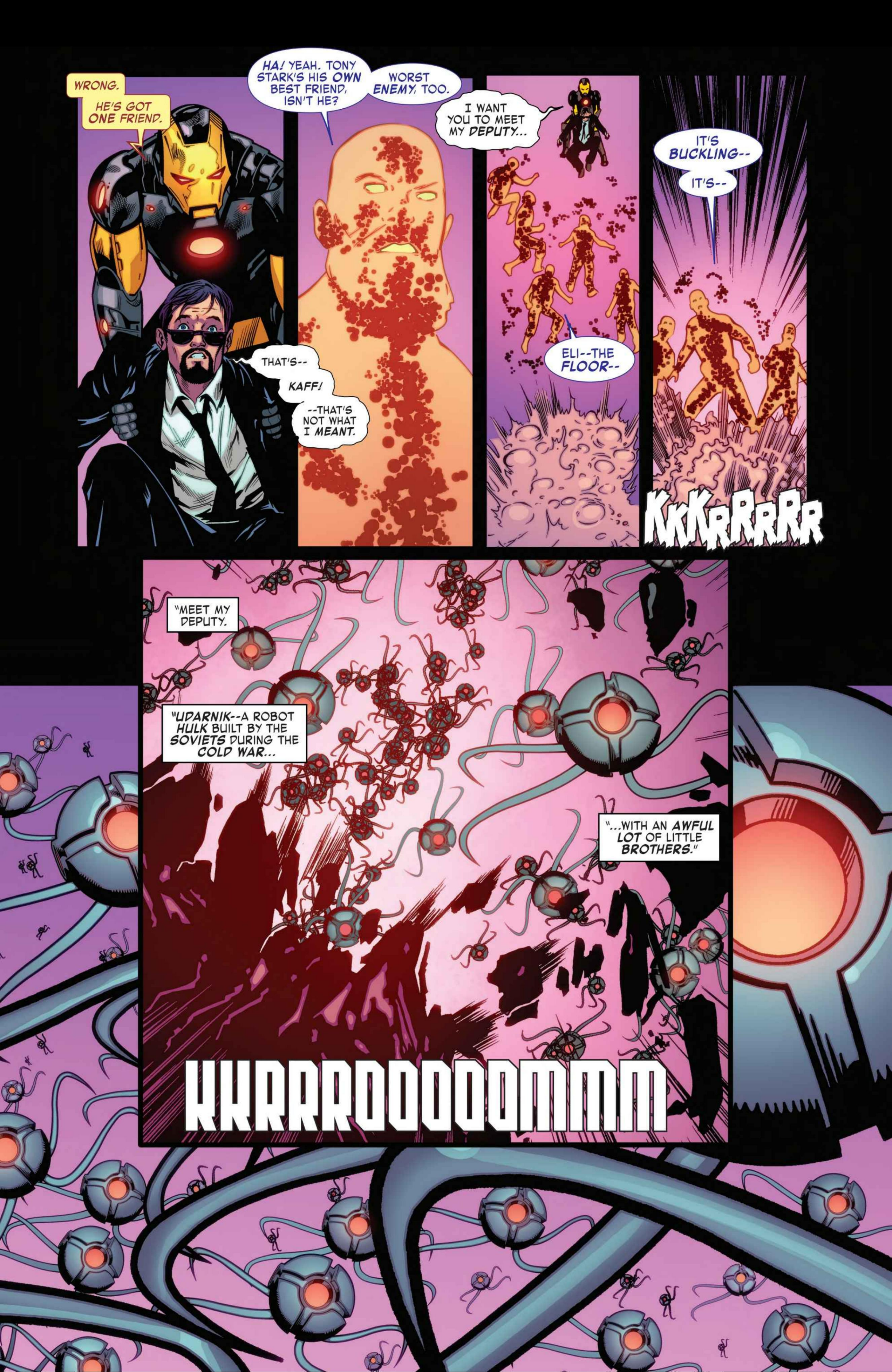

TRULY I AM TEH BOMB
ALL THE TECH I WANT OUT IN THE WORLD GETS COPIED OVER--
--IS THAT PLANS FOR A WORKING SPACE FARM? VERY TASTY--
--AND ALL THE TECH YOU WANT GONE...GETS GONE.
NO MORE TEXTILE™, SHERIFF.
THE TIDE STAYS OUT FOR ANOTHER DAY.
DOWNLOAD COMPLETE
JUST DOING MY DUTY, FOLKS.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:00 UTC.
...
THIS IS A HEIST MOVIE.

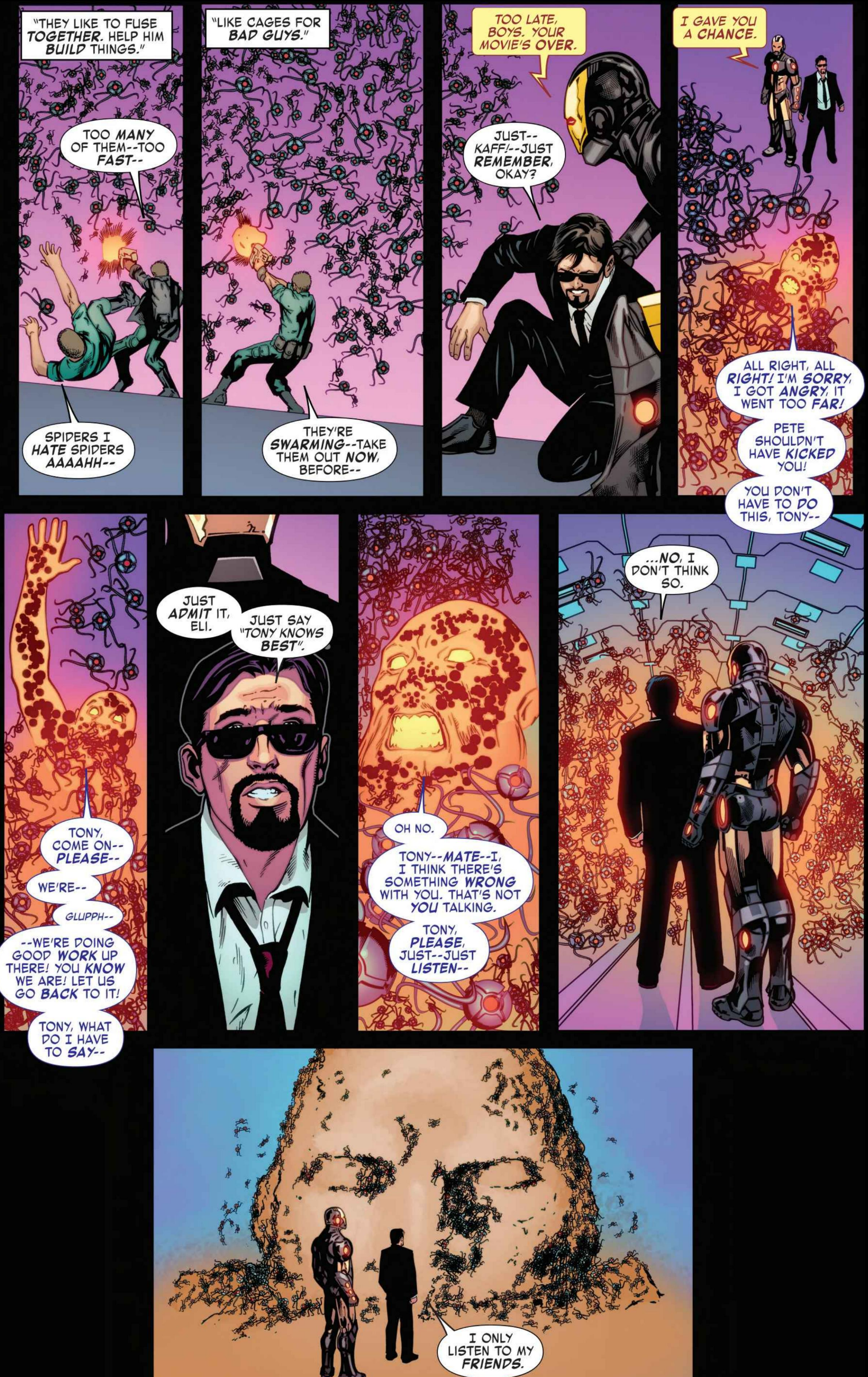

SOMEWHERE, PART OF ME IS THINKING OUT LOUD, TRYING TO KEEP ALL THIS STRAIGHT IN HIS HEAD.
IT'S DIFFICULT.
IT'S GETTING HARDER TO KEEP MY MIND COMPARTMENTALIZED LIKE THIS.
BUT I'M REMEMBERING THAT HEIST MOVIES ARE TWISTY, TURNY THINGS, AND THAT'S WHY I LOVE THEM.
MAYBE THERE'S A TWIST I HAVEN'T SEEN YET...
NOW WHO ARE THESE ODDBALLS? OBVIOUS SECURITY, BUT A TYPE I'VE NOT COME ACROSS...
POWERFUL, TOO.
GIVING ME SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT EVEN WITH THE G.H.O.S.T. TECH.
A BUNCH OF LITTLE MYSTERIES...
...BUT NOT FOR LONG.
THERE. THAT IS HOW YOU DO THAT.
AND THEY WERE GUARDING...WHAT?
ANDERSON SIXTY?
WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?
SOMETHING'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE BACKGROUND HERE. SOMETHING ABOUT CORTEX--ABOUT SIXTY--THAT I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT.
QUITE A BIG THING, ACTUALLY.
SOMETHING THAT MIGHT JUST MAKE EVERYTHING PLAY OUT DIFFERENTLY...

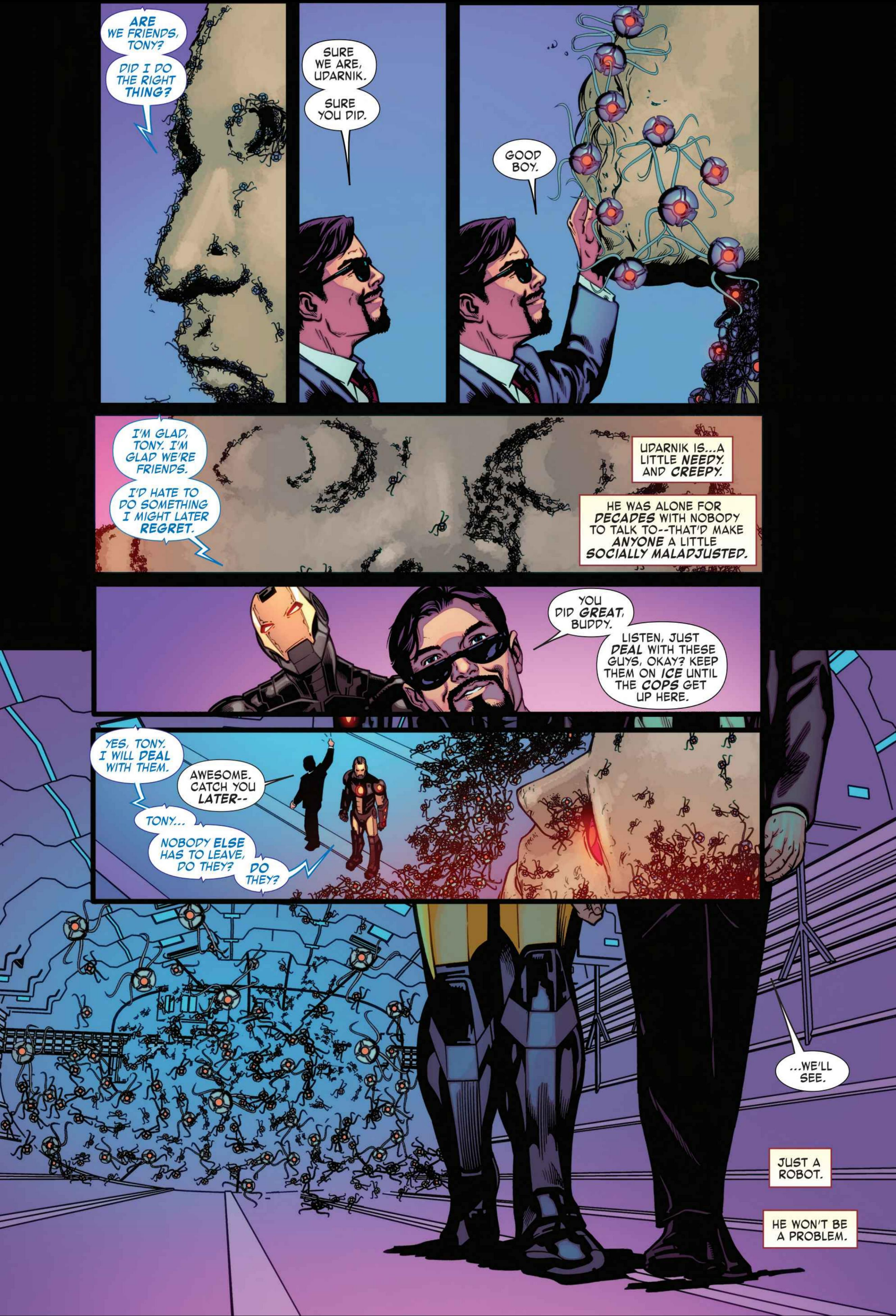

WARNING.
YOUR SYSTEM IS IN DANGER OF CATASTROPHIC OVERLOAD.
PREPARING TO CEASE TIME DILATION AND DECOMPARTMENTALIZE ORGANIC FIRMWARE.
OH, NOT NOW...
LOOKS LIKE MY TIME IN HERE IS COMING TO AN END.
STILL, I'VE GOT WHAT I NEEDED.
TEXTILE™ IS DESTROYED. I CAN SEND ELI PACKING BEFORE HE DOES ANY MORE DAMAGE.
I HAVE ANDERSON SIXTY'S CONFIDENCE...
...AND I HAVE A CLUE OR TWO ABOUT WHO HE REALLY IS. SOMETHING TO START ME OFF, AT LEAST.
SAFETY PROTOCOLS ENGAGED. MERGING SYSTEMS IN THREE.
IF NOTHING ELSE, I KNOW FOR SURE...
TWO.
...THAT I'M BEING LIED TO.
ONE.
SYSTEMS MERGED SUCCESSFULLY.
G.H.O.S.T. TOOLKIT SHUTTING DOWN.
SO...THAT'S THE FULL STORY. MY ENTIRE BIG CLEVER PLAN.
THAT'S HOW I DID IT.
TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 00:15 UTC.
ADMIT IT, ELI.
YOU'RE A LITTLE IMPRESSED, RIGHT?
I'M GOING TO TURN YOU INTO A PROTEIN DRINK.
YOU EVIL LITTLE GIT.

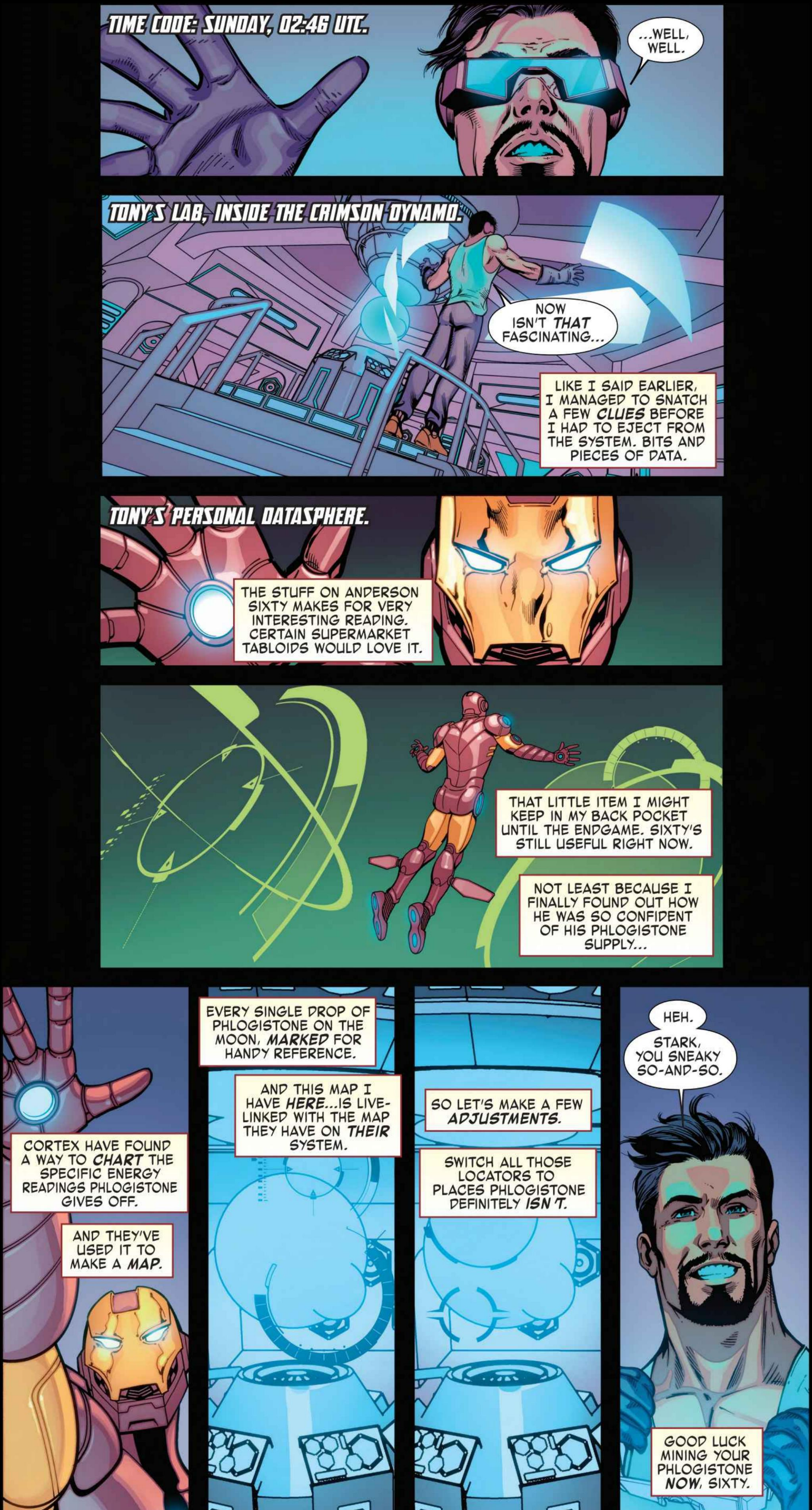

"EVIL"?
KINDA HARSH, THERE. AND, DARE I SAY IT-- JUDGEMENTAL.
YOU CAN STILL MAKE A CLEAN GETAWAY, ELI. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE ARRESTED.
YEAH, I THINK I WANT TO BE ARRESTED, TONY.
CRIME OF PASSION, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
"I FINALLY HAD ENOUGH OF THE STEAMING COW PIES FLOPPING OUT OF HIS BEARDY CAKEHOLE, OFFICER, SO I STARTED WITH THE TOES--"
YOU WERE BEING A NUISANCE, SO I TOOK YOU OFF THE BOARD. THE END.
THERE ARE FACTORS HERE YOU CAN'T GRASP, OKAY? THEY'RE BEYOND YOU. JUST TRUST ME AND LEAVE.
YOU HEARD THE MAN.
"TONY KNOWS BEST."
YOU SMUG
ARROGANT
LITTLE PONCE--
--AAAHH!
SO MAYBE YOU SHOULD BACK OFF AND START LISTENING TO--
AND I CAN BACK IT UP, TOO.
YOU HONESTLY THINK THAT'S GONNA DO IT?
I'M AN EXTREMIS ENHANCILE, YOU BLOODY HERBERT! I CAN SPACEWALK WITHOUT A SUIT--
UNNNNH--
SH... SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT...
SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, ELI. WE WERE GOING TO PLAY NICE.
I SAID TO STOP DOING THAT!
YOU KNOW WHAT?

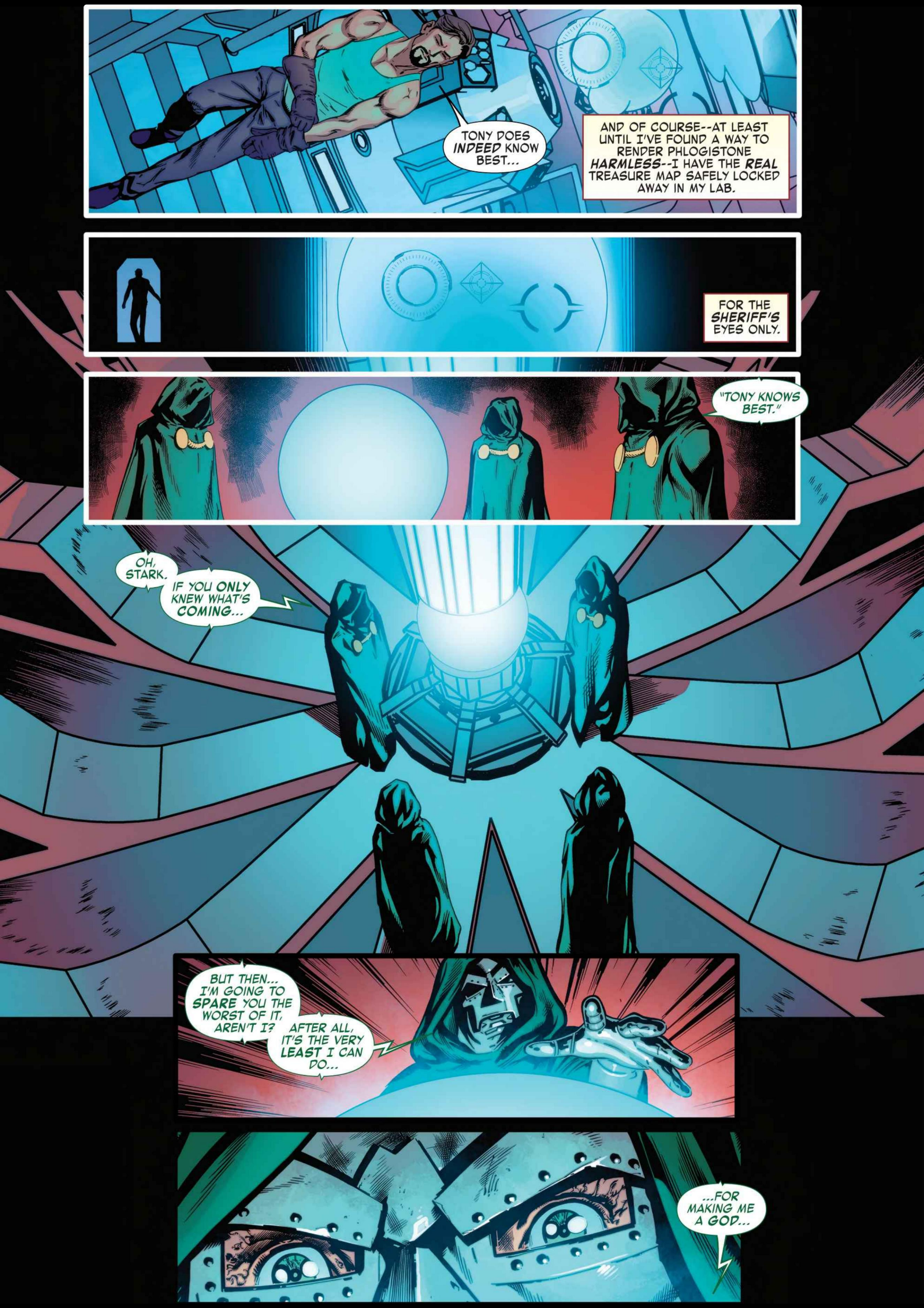

I'M GOING TO *DISMANTLE* YOU, "SHERIFF IRON MAN". WHILE TONY *WATCHES.*
WE'RE GOING TO FERRET OUT EVERY LITTLE SECRET YOU *KEEP* IN THERE. EVERYTHING YOU'RE KEEPING FROM THE *WORLD.*
AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO *TELL* THEM.
YOU *REALLY* DON'T WANT TO *DO* THAT, ELI--I *MEAN* IT--
SOME THINGS YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT--
SHUT IT!
WE'VE HAD *ENOUGH,* ALL RIGHT? WE'VE *ALL* HAD ENOUGH!
WHOULPH--
TONY STARK! WHO MADE *YOU* KING OF TECH, EH?
WHO *ELECTED* YOU, YOU TWO-FACED LITTLE *MEGALOMANIAC--*
HEH.
MEGALOMANIA-- ONE OF THE--THE *SYMPTOMS* OF--
--Y'KNOW WHAT, FORGET IT--
THINK--THINK YOU AGGRAVATED SOME OLD *INJURIES* THERE, GUY--
--COULD USE A LITTLE *HELP--*
NOBODY'S COMING TO HELP YOU, TONY.
YOU'VE GOT NO *FRIENDS.* NOT HERE.
MAYBE NOT *ANYWHERE.*

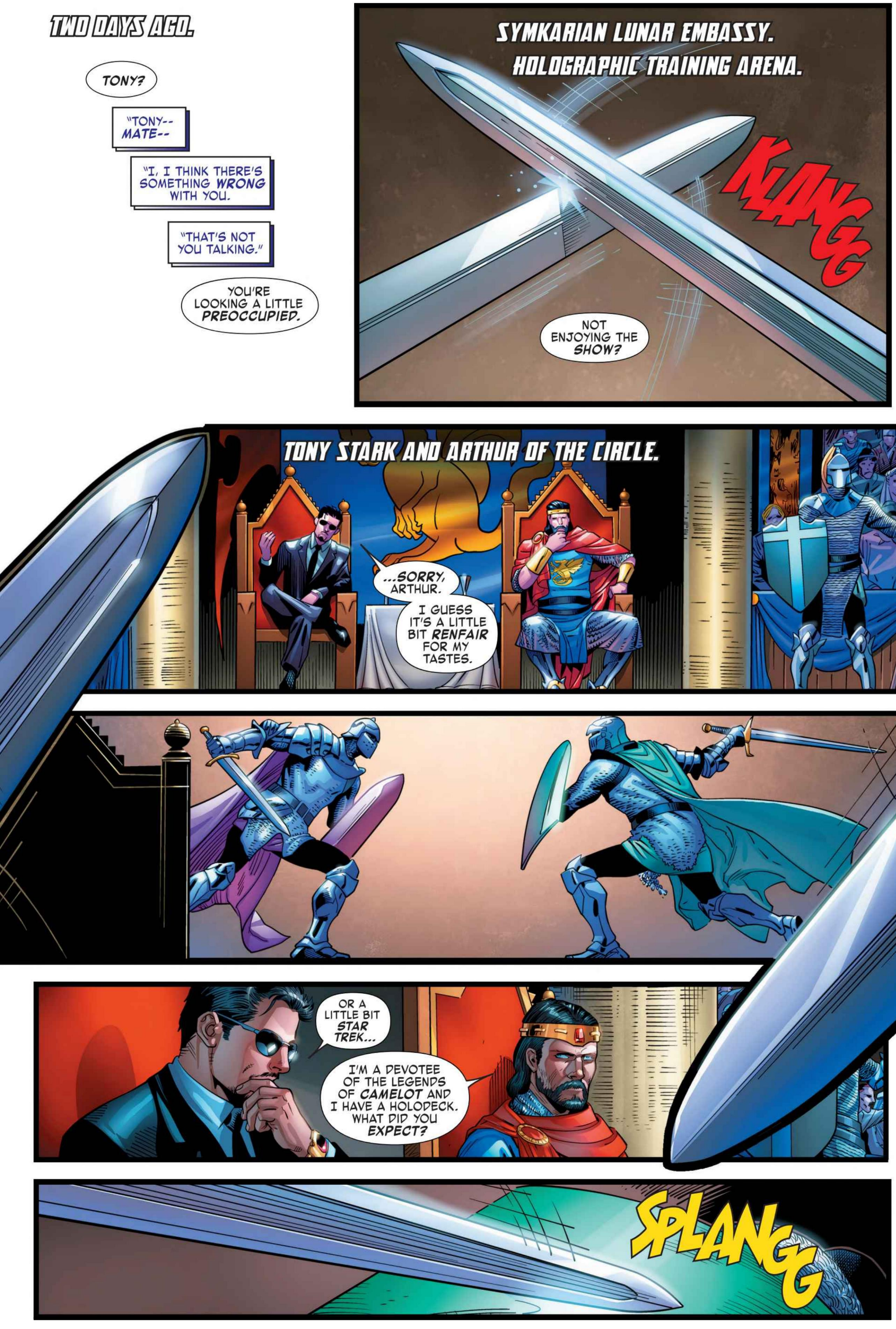

WRONG.
HE'S GOT ONE FRIEND.
THAT'S--
KAFF!
--THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
HA! YEAH. TONY STARK'S HIS OWN BEST FRIEND, ISN'T HE?
WORST ENEMY, TOO.
I WANT YOU TO MEET MY DEPUTY...
ELI--THE FLOOR--
IT'S BUCKLING--
IT'S--
KKKRRRRR
"MEET MY DEPUTY.
"UDARNIK--A ROBOT HULK BUILT BY THE SOVIETS DURING THE COLD WAR...
"...WITH AN AWFUL LOT OF LITTLE BROTHERS."
KKRRRROOOOOMMMM

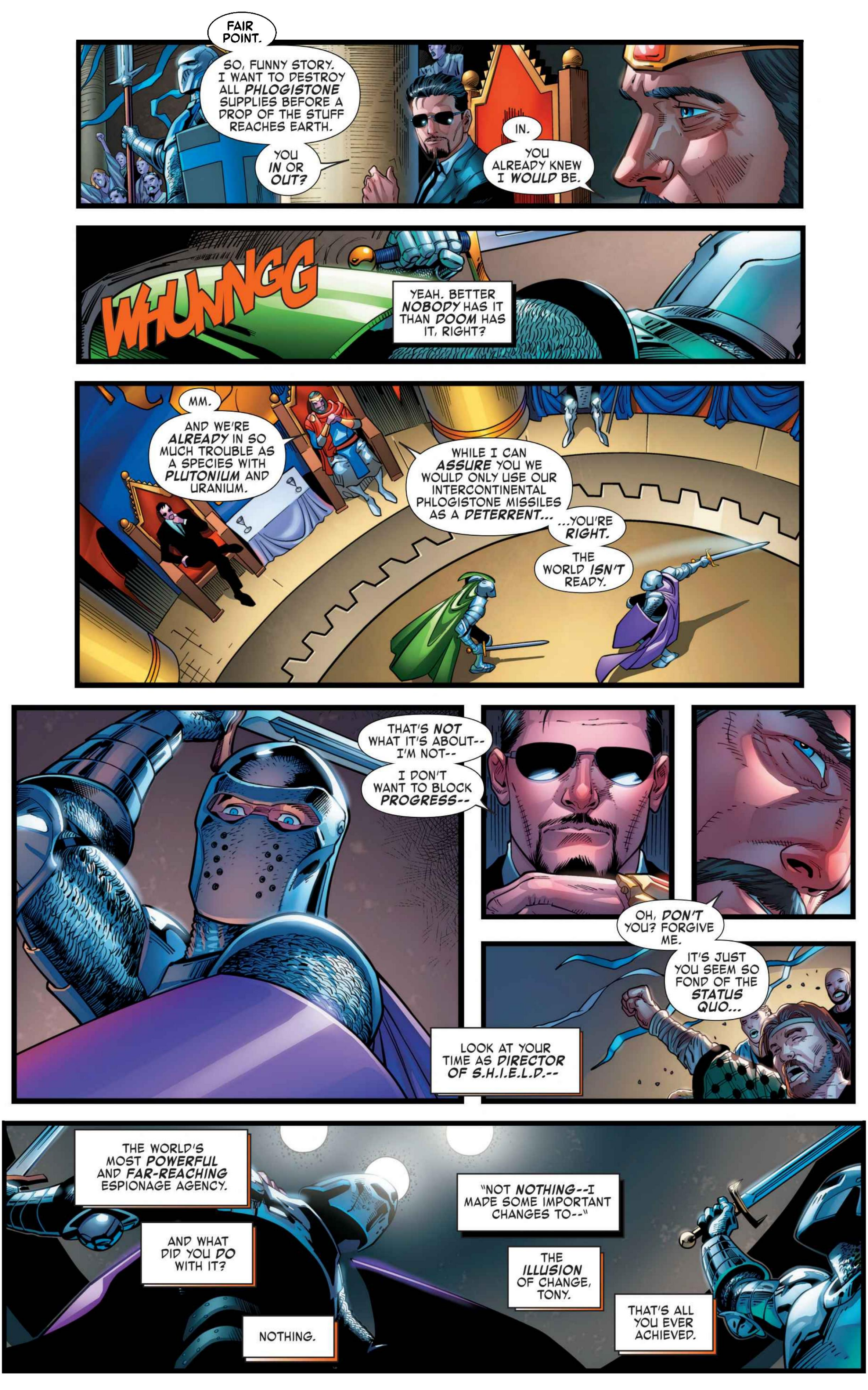

"THEY LIKE TO FUSE TOGETHER. HELP HIM BUILD THINGS."
TOO MANY OF THEM--TOO FAST--
SPIDERS I HATE SPIDERS AAAAHH--
"LIKE CAGES FOR BAD GUYS."
THEY'RE SWARMING--TAKE THEM OUT NOW, BEFORE--
TOO LATE, BOYS. YOUR MOVIE'S OVER.
JUST--KAFF!--JUST REMEMBER, OKAY?
I GAVE YOU A CHANCE.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! I'M SORRY, I GOT ANGRY, IT WENT TOO FAR!
PETE SHOULDN'T HAVE KICKED YOU!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS, TONY--
TONY, COME ON--PLEASE--
WE'RE--
GLUPPH--
--WE'RE DOING GOOD WORK UP THERE! YOU KNOW WE ARE! LET US GO BACK TO IT!
TONY, WHAT DO I HAVE TO SAY--
JUST ADMIT IT, ELI.
JUST SAY "TONY KNOWS BEST".
OH NO.
TONY--MATE--I, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU. THAT'S NOT YOU TALKING.
TONY, PLEASE, JUST--JUST LISTEN--
...NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
I ONLY LISTEN TO MY FRIENDS.

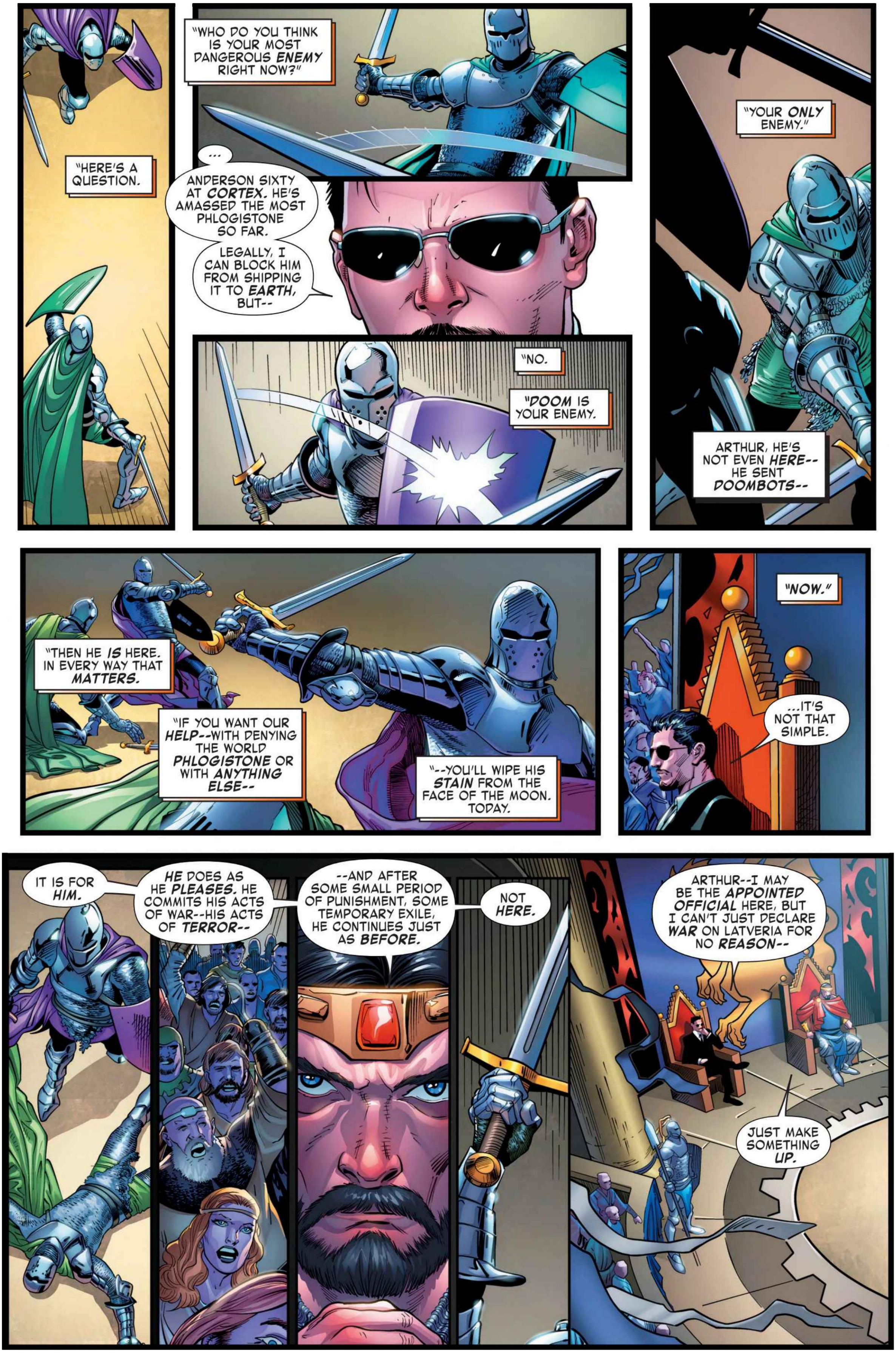

ARE WE FRIENDS, TONY?
DID I DO THE RIGHT THING?
SURE WE ARE, UDARNIK.
SURE YOU DID.
GOOD BOY.
I'M GLAD, TONY. I'M GLAD WE'RE FRIENDS.
I'D HATE TO DO SOMETHING I MIGHT LATER REGRET.
UDARNIK IS...A LITTLE NEEDY. AND CREEPY.
HE WAS ALONE FOR DECADES WITH NOBODY TO TALK TO--THAT'D MAKE ANYONE A LITTLE SOCIALLY MALADJUSTED.
YOU DID GREAT, BUDDY.
LISTEN, JUST DEAL WITH THESE GUYS, OKAY? KEEP THEM ON ICE UNTIL THE COPS GET UP HERE.
YES, TONY. I WILL DEAL WITH THEM.
AWESOME. CATCH YOU LATER--
TONY...
NOBODY ELSE HAS TO LEAVE, DO THEY? DO THEY?
...WE'LL SEE.
JUST A ROBOT.
HE WON'T BE A PROBLEM.

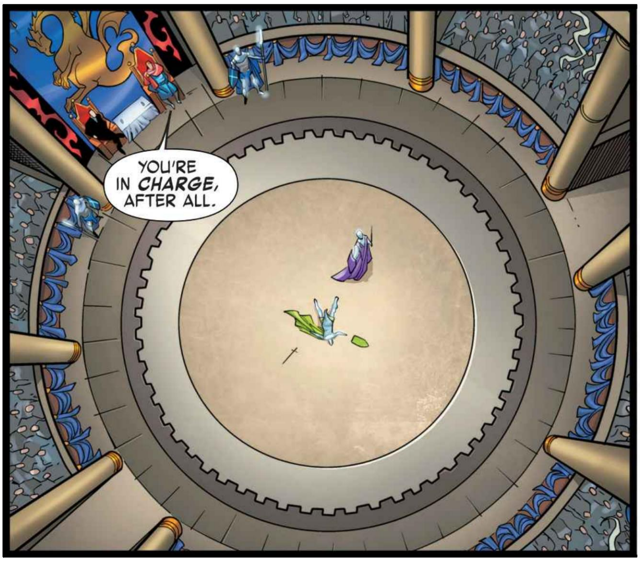

TIME CODE: SUNDAY, 02:46 UTC.
...WELL, WELL.
TONY'S LAB, INSIDE THE CRIMSON DYNAMO.
NOW ISN'T *THAT* FASCINATING...
LIKE I SAID EARLIER, I MANAGED TO SNATCH A FEW *CLUES* BEFORE I HAD TO EJECT FROM THE SYSTEM. BITS AND PIECES OF DATA.
TONY'S PERSONAL DATASPHERE.
THE STUFF ON ANDERSON SIXTY MAKES FOR VERY INTERESTING READING. CERTAIN SUPERMARKET TABLOIDS WOULD LOVE IT.
THAT LITTLE ITEM I MIGHT KEEP IN MY BACK POCKET UNTIL THE ENDGAME. SIXTY'S STILL USEFUL RIGHT NOW.
NOT LEAST BECAUSE I FINALLY FOUND OUT HOW HE WAS SO CONFIDENT OF HIS PHLOGISTONE SUPPLY...
CORTEX HAVE FOUND A WAY TO *CHART* THE SPECIFIC ENERGY READINGS PHLOGISTONE GIVES OFF.
AND THEY'VE USED IT TO MAKE A *MAP*.
EVERY SINGLE DROP OF PHLOGISTONE ON THE MOON, *MARKED* FOR HANDY REFERENCE.
AND THIS MAP I HAVE *HERE*...IS LIVE-LINKED WITH THE MAP THEY HAVE ON *THEIR* SYSTEM.
SO LET'S MAKE A FEW *ADJUSTMENTS.*
SWITCH ALL THOSE LOCATORS TO PLACES PHLOGISTONE DEFINITELY *ISN'T.*
HEH.
STARK, YOU SNEAKY SO-AND-SO.
GOOD LUCK MINING YOUR PHLOGISTONE *NOW*, SIXTY.

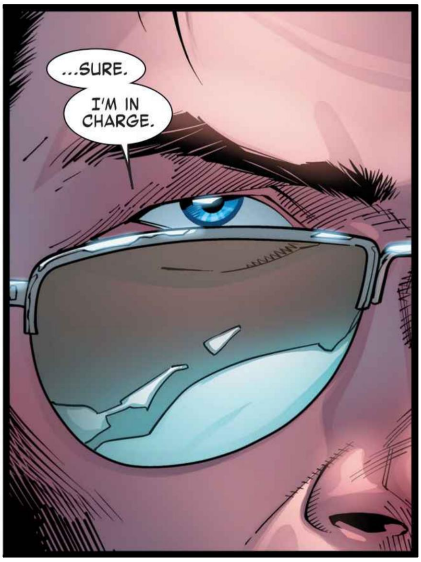

TONY DOES *INDEED* KNOW BEST...
AND OF COURSE--AT LEAST UNTIL I'VE FOUND A WAY TO RENDER PHLOGISTONE *HARMLESS*--I HAVE THE *REAL* TREASURE MAP SAFELY LOCKED AWAY IN MY LAB.
FOR THE *SHERIFF'S* EYES ONLY.
"TONY KNOWS BEST."
OH, STARK.
IF YOU **ONLY** KNEW WHAT'S **COMING**...
BUT THEN... I'M GOING TO **SPARE** YOU THE WORST OF IT, AREN'T I?
AFTER ALL, IT'S THE VERY **LEAST** I CAN DO...
...FOR MAKING ME A **GOD**...

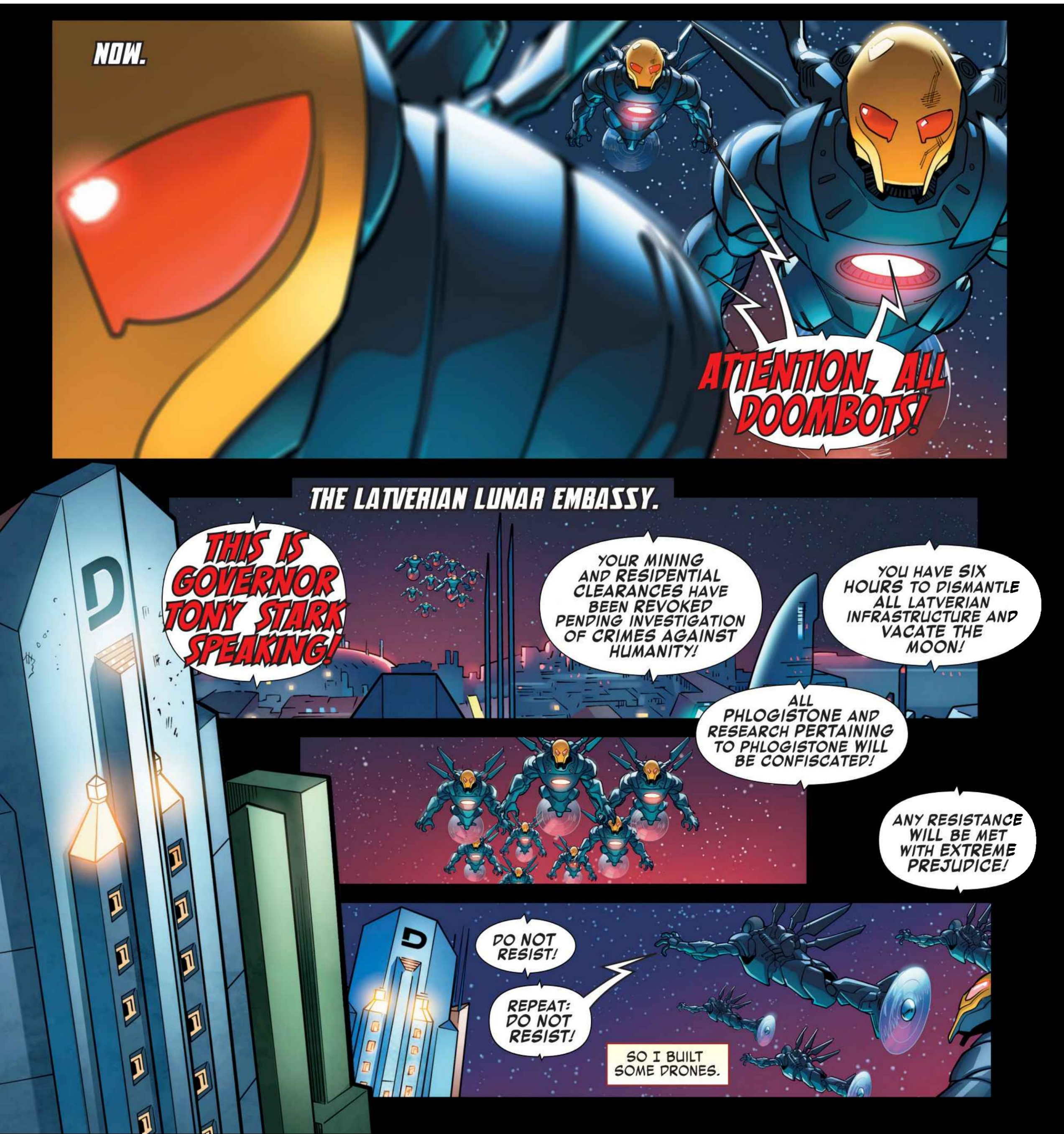

TWO DAYS AGO.
TONY?
"TONY-- MATE--
"I, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU.
"THAT'S NOT YOU TALKING."
YOU'RE LOOKING A LITTLE PREOCCUPIED.
SYMKARIAN LUNAR EMBASSY. HOLOGRAPHIC TRAINING ARENA.
KLANGG
NOT ENJOYING THE SHOW?
TONY STARK AND ARTHUR OF THE CIRCLE.
...SORRY, ARTHUR.
I GUESS IT'S A LITTLE BIT RENFAIR FOR MY TASTES.
OR A LITTLE BIT STAR TREK...
I'M A DEVOTEE OF THE LEGENDS OF CAMELOT AND I HAVE A HOLODECK. WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
SPLANGG

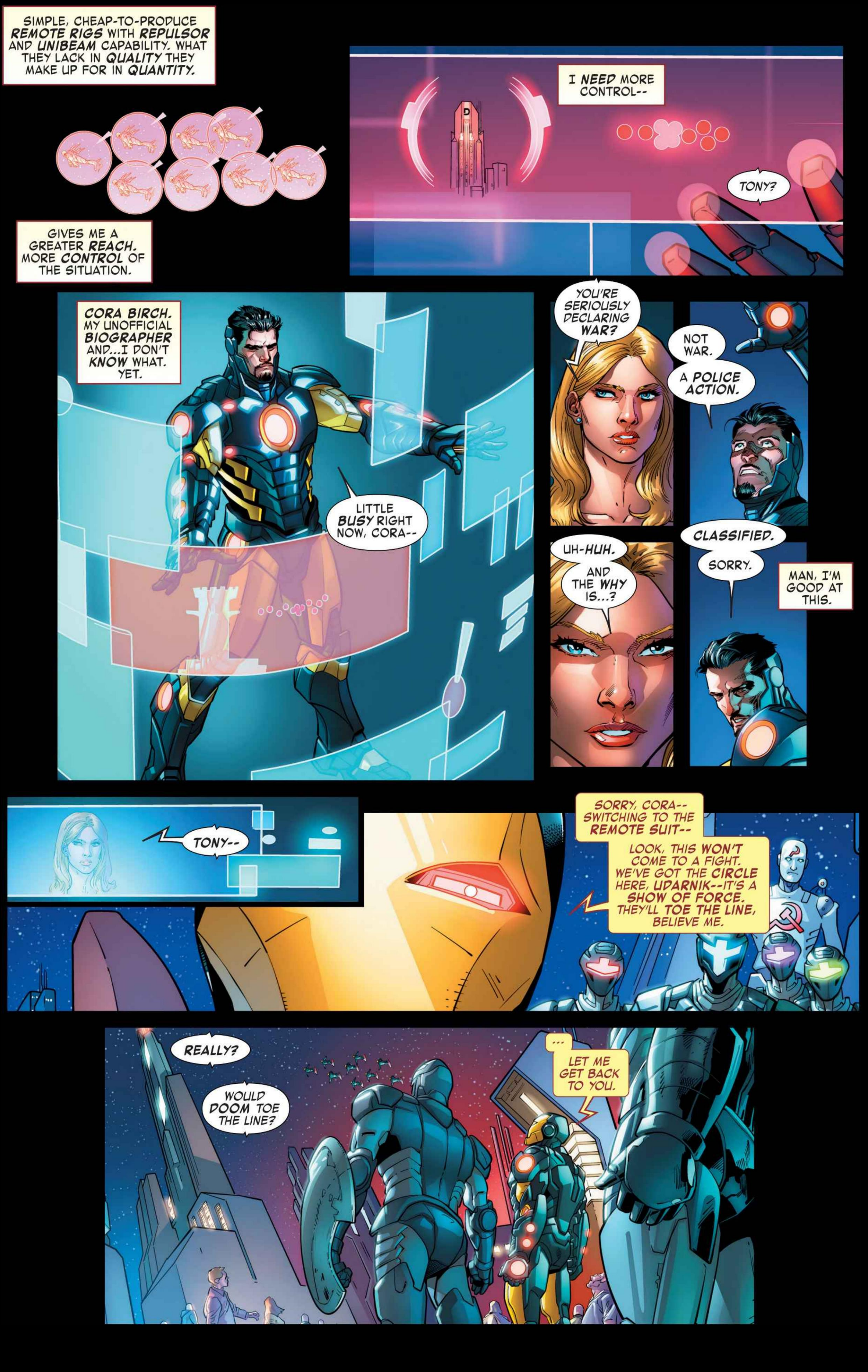

FAIR POINT.
SO, FUNNY STORY. I WANT TO DESTROY ALL *PHLOGISTONE* SUPPLIES BEFORE A DROP OF THE STUFF REACHES EARTH.
YOU *IN* OR *OUT?*
IN.
YOU ALREADY KNEW I *WOULD* BE.
WHUNNGG
YEAH. BETTER *NOBODY* HAS IT THAN *DOOM* HAS IT, RIGHT?
MM.
AND WE'RE *ALREADY* IN SO MUCH TROUBLE AS A SPECIES WITH *PLUTONIUM* AND URANIUM.
WHILE I CAN *ASSURE* YOU WE WOULD ONLY USE OUR INTERCONTINENTAL PHLOGISTONE MISSILES AS A *DETERRENT...*
...YOU'RE *RIGHT.*
THE WORLD *ISN'T* READY.
THAT'S *NOT* WHAT IT'S ABOUT-- I'M NOT--
I DON'T WANT TO BLOCK *PROGRESS--*
OH, *DON'T* YOU? FORGIVE ME.
IT'S JUST YOU SEEM SO FOND OF THE *STATUS QUO...*
LOOK AT YOUR TIME AS *DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D.--*
THE WORLD'S MOST *POWERFUL* AND *FAR-REACHING* ESPIONAGE AGENCY.
AND WHAT DID YOU *DO* WITH IT?
NOTHING.
"NOT *NOTHING--*I MADE SOME IMPORTANT CHANGES TO--"
THE *ILLUSION* OF CHANGE, TONY.
THAT'S ALL YOU EVER ACHIEVED.

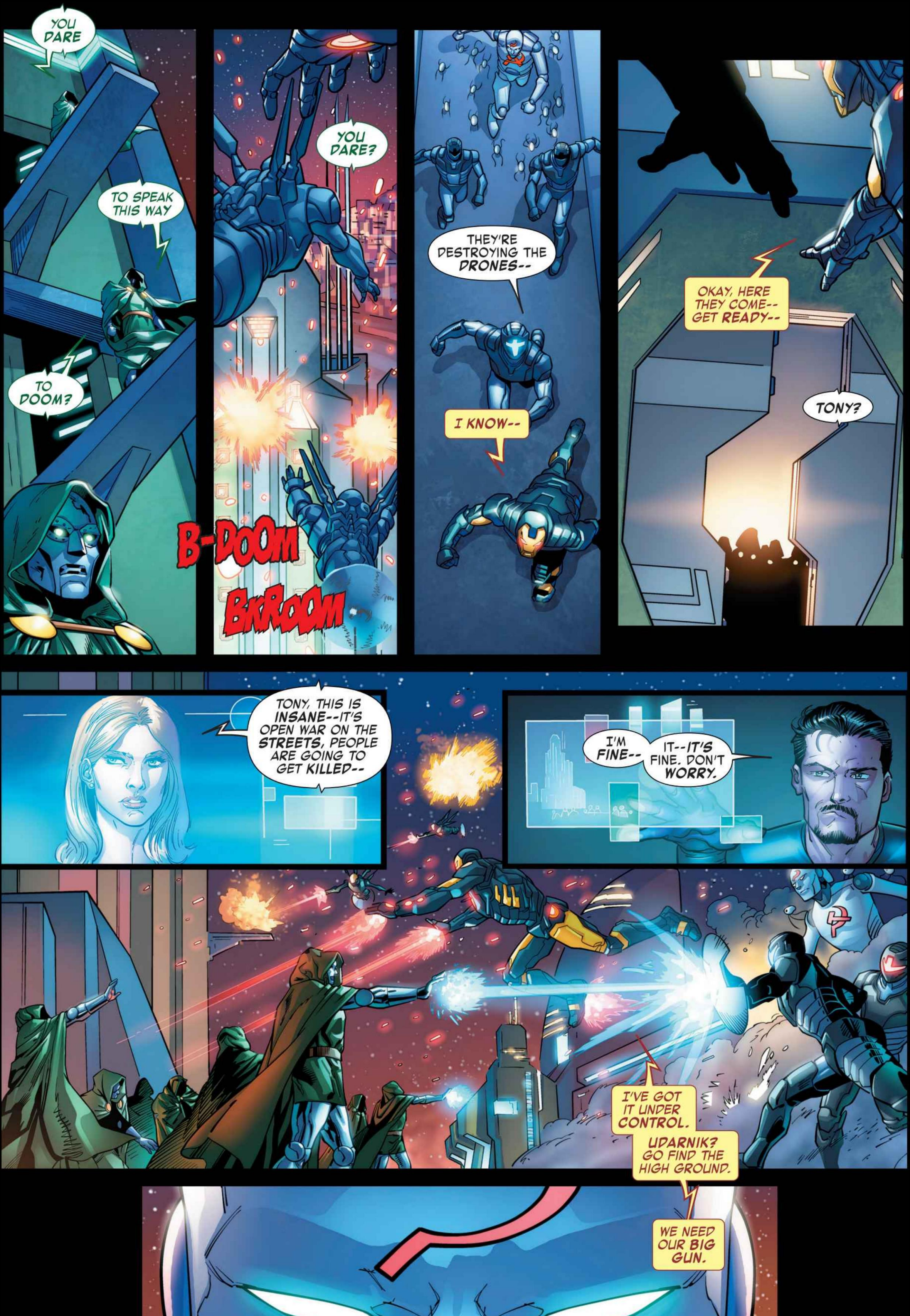

"HERE'S A QUESTION.
"WHO DO YOU THINK IS YOUR MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY RIGHT NOW?"
...
ANDERSON SIXTY AT CORTEX. HE'S AMASSED THE MOST PHLOGISTONE SO FAR.
LEGALLY, I CAN BLOCK HIM FROM SHIPPING IT TO EARTH, BUT--
"NO.
"DOOM IS YOUR ENEMY.
"YOUR ONLY ENEMY."
ARTHUR, HE'S NOT EVEN HERE-- HE SENT DOOMBOTS--
"THEN HE IS HERE. IN EVERY WAY THAT MATTERS.
"IF YOU WANT OUR HELP--WITH DENYING THE WORLD PHLOGISTONE OR WITH ANYTHING ELSE--
"--YOU'LL WIPE HIS STAIN FROM THE FACE OF THE MOON. TODAY.
"NOW."
...IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
IT IS FOR HIM.
HE DOES AS HE PLEASES. HE COMMITS HIS ACTS OF WAR--HIS ACTS OF TERROR--
--AND AFTER SOME SMALL PERIOD OF PUNISHMENT, SOME TEMPORARY EXILE, HE CONTINUES JUST AS BEFORE.
NOT HERE.
ARTHUR--I MAY BE THE APPOINTED OFFICIAL HERE, BUT I CAN'T JUST DECLARE WAR ON LATVERIA FOR NO REASON--
JUST MAKE SOMETHING UP.

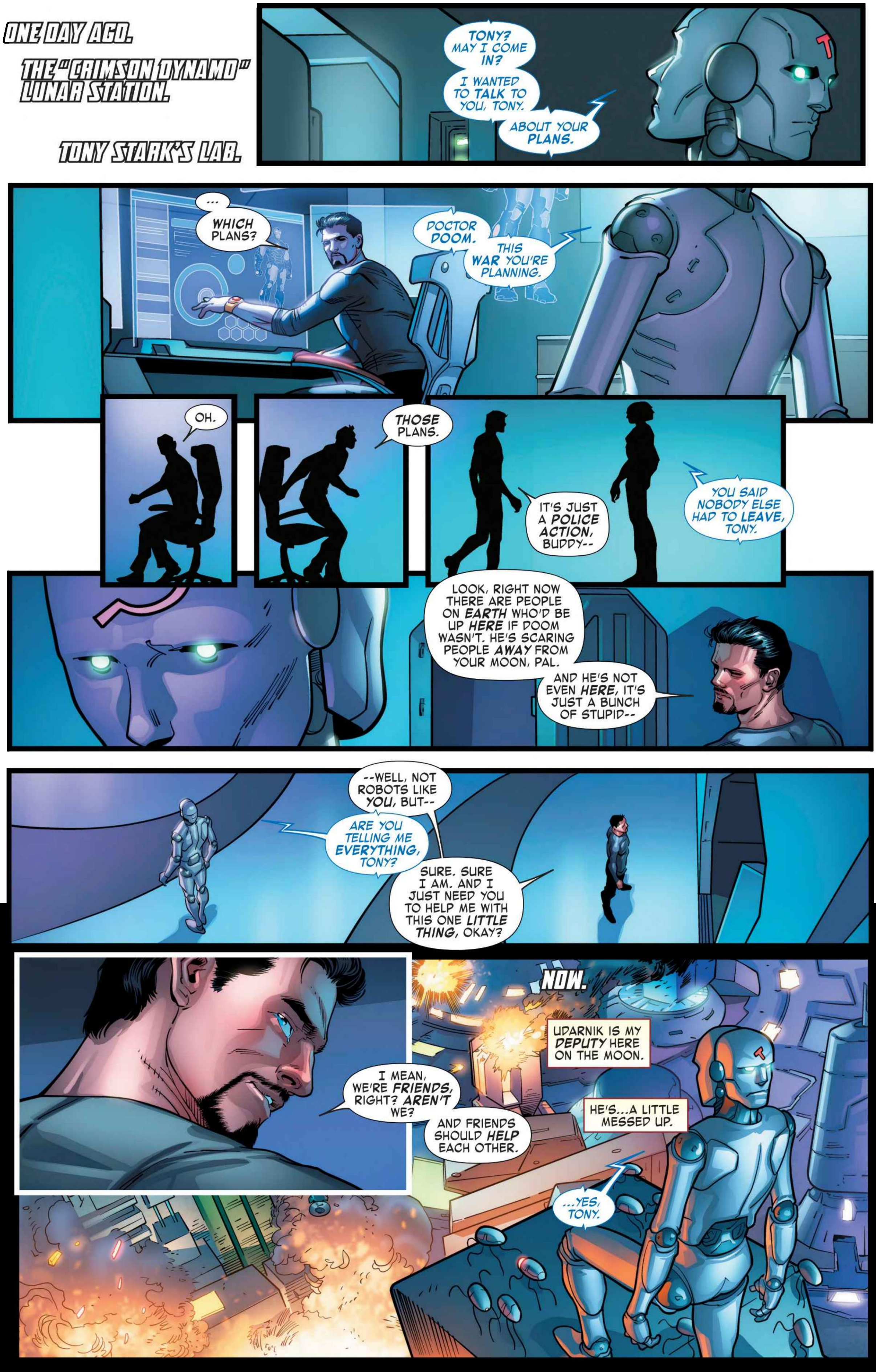

YOU'RE IN CHARGE, AFTER ALL.

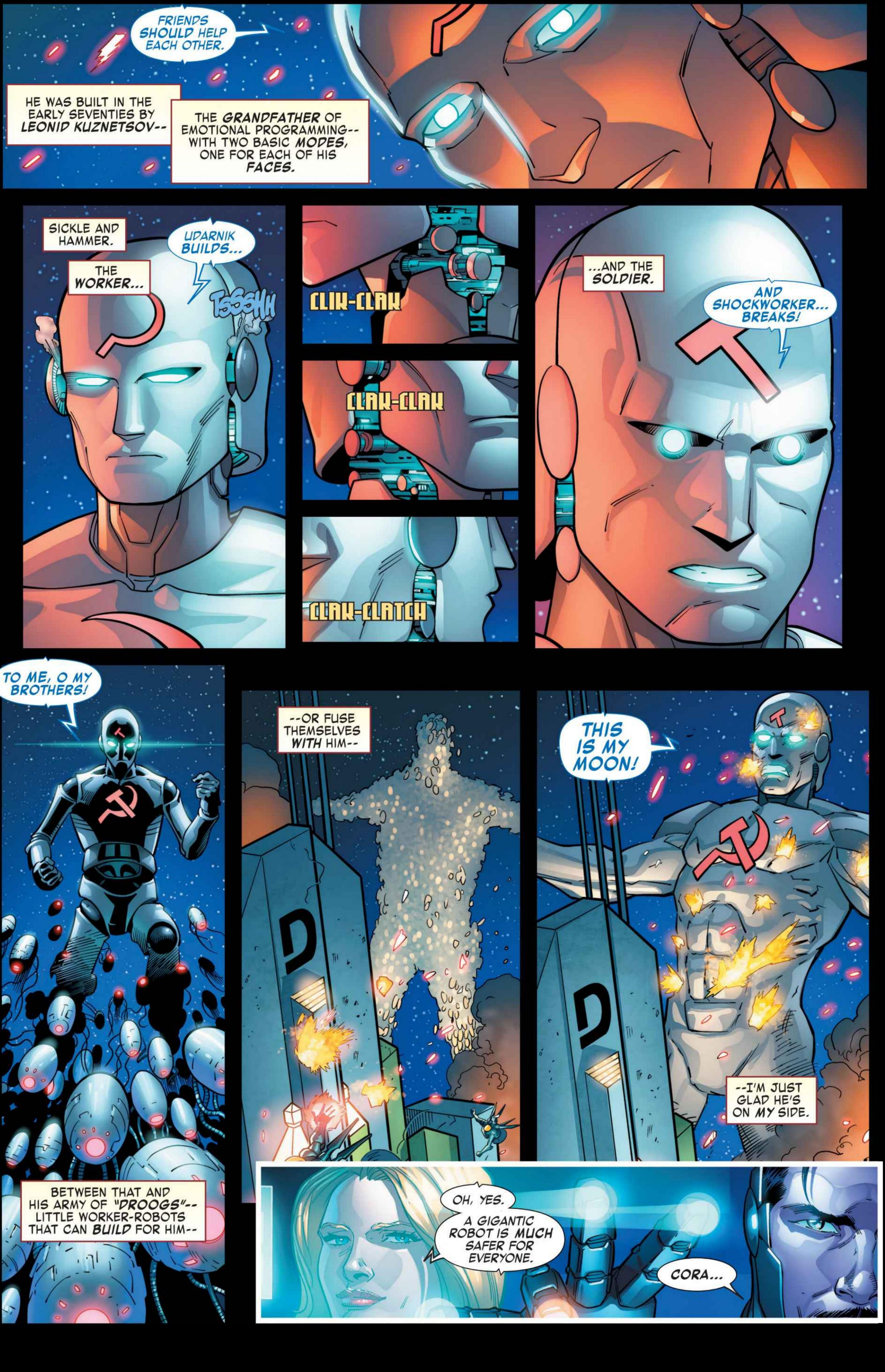

...SURE.
I'M IN CHARGE.

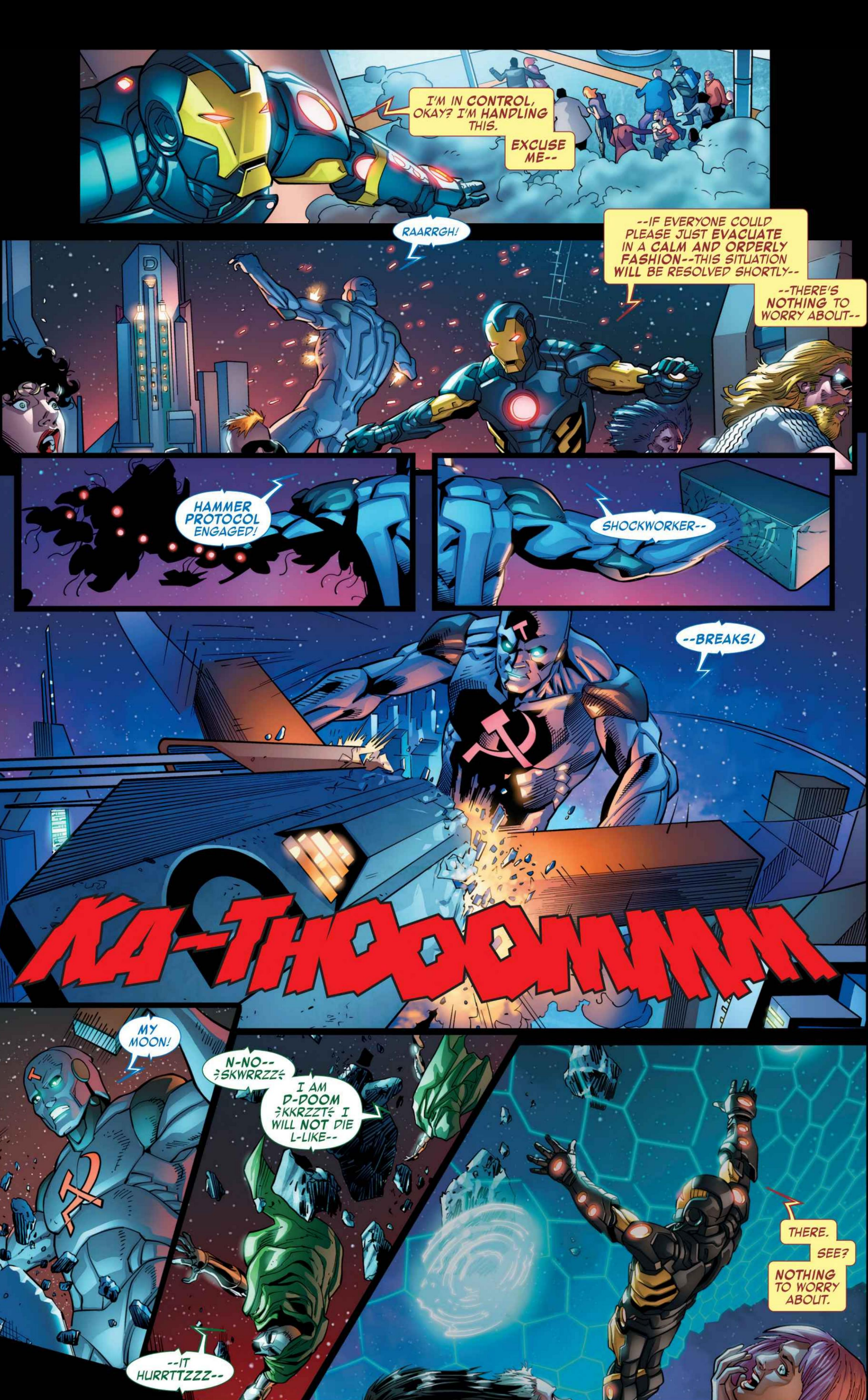

NOW.
ATTENTION, ALL DOOMBOTS!
THE LATVERIAN LUNAR EMBASSY.
THIS IS GOVERNOR TONY STARK SPEAKING!
YOUR MINING AND RESIDENTIAL CLEARANCES HAVE BEEN REVOKED PENDING INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY!
YOU HAVE SIX HOURS TO DISMANTLE ALL LATVERIAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND VACATE THE MOON!
ALL PHLOGISTONE AND RESEARCH PERTAINING TO PHLOGISTONE WILL BE CONFISCATED!
ANY RESISTANCE WILL BE MET WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE!
DO NOT RESIST!
REPEAT: DO NOT RESIST!
SO I BUILT SOME DRONES.

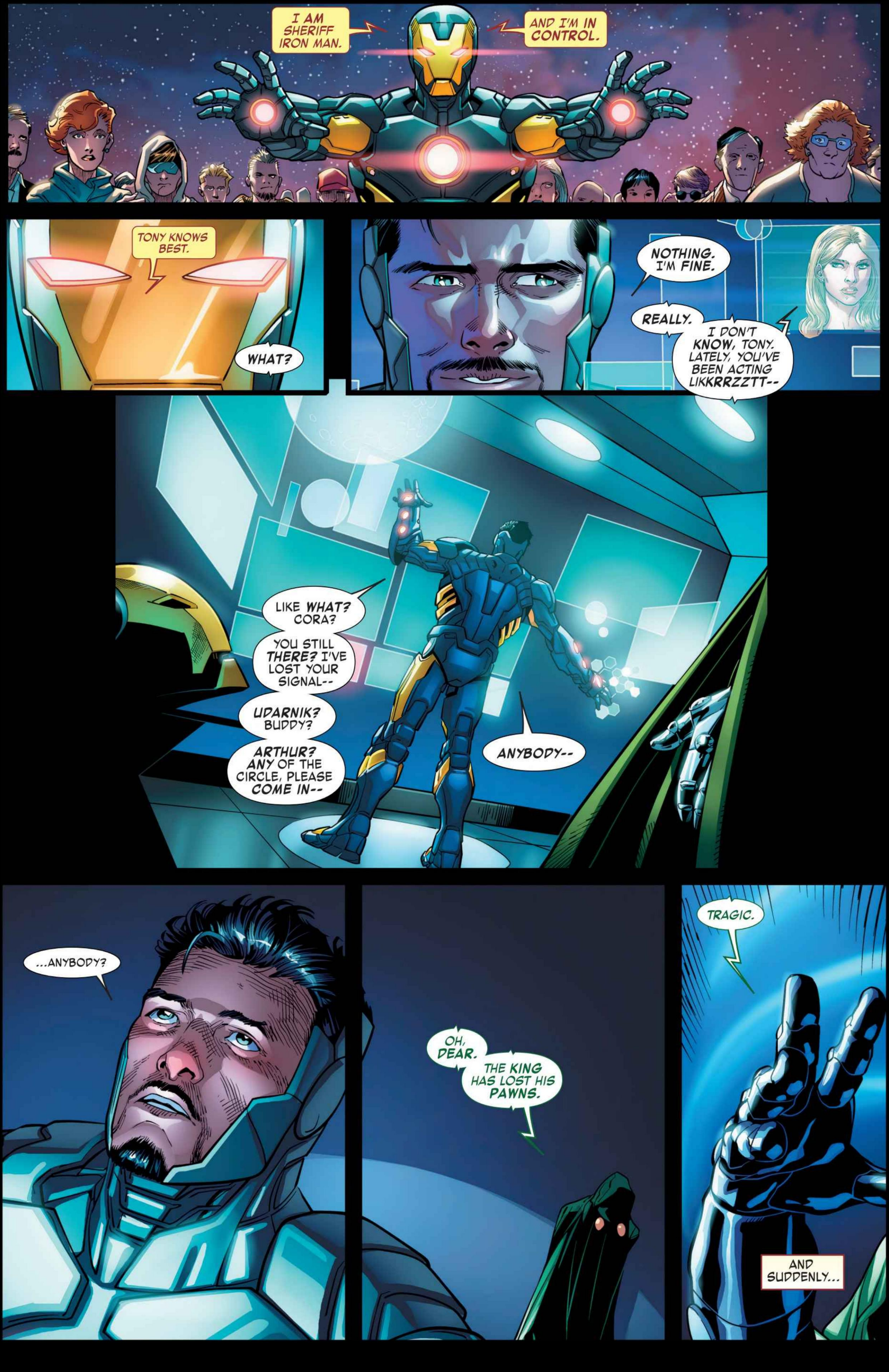

SIMPLE, CHEAP-TO-PRODUCE **REMOTE RIGS** WITH **REPULSOR** AND **UNIBEAM** CAPABILITY. WHAT THEY LACK IN **QUALITY** THEY MAKE UP FOR IN **QUANTITY.**
GIVES ME A GREATER **REACH.** MORE **CONTROL** OF THE SITUATION.
I **NEED** MORE CONTROL--
TONY?
CORA BIRCH. MY UNOFFICIAL **BIOGRAPHER** AND...I DON'T **KNOW** WHAT. YET.
LITTLE **BUSY** RIGHT NOW, CORA--
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY DECLARING **WAR?**
NOT WAR. A **POLICE ACTION.**
UH-**HUH.** AND THE **WHY** IS...?
CLASSIFIED.
SORRY.
MAN, I'M GOOD AT THIS.
TONY--
SORRY, CORA-- SWITCHING TO THE **REMOTE SUIT--**
LOOK, THIS **WON'T** COME TO A FIGHT. WE'VE GOT THE **CIRCLE** HERE, **UDARNIK**--IT'S A **SHOW OF FORCE.** THEY'LL **TOE THE LINE,** BELIEVE ME.
REALLY?
WOULD **DOOM** TOE THE LINE?
...
LET ME GET BACK TO YOU.

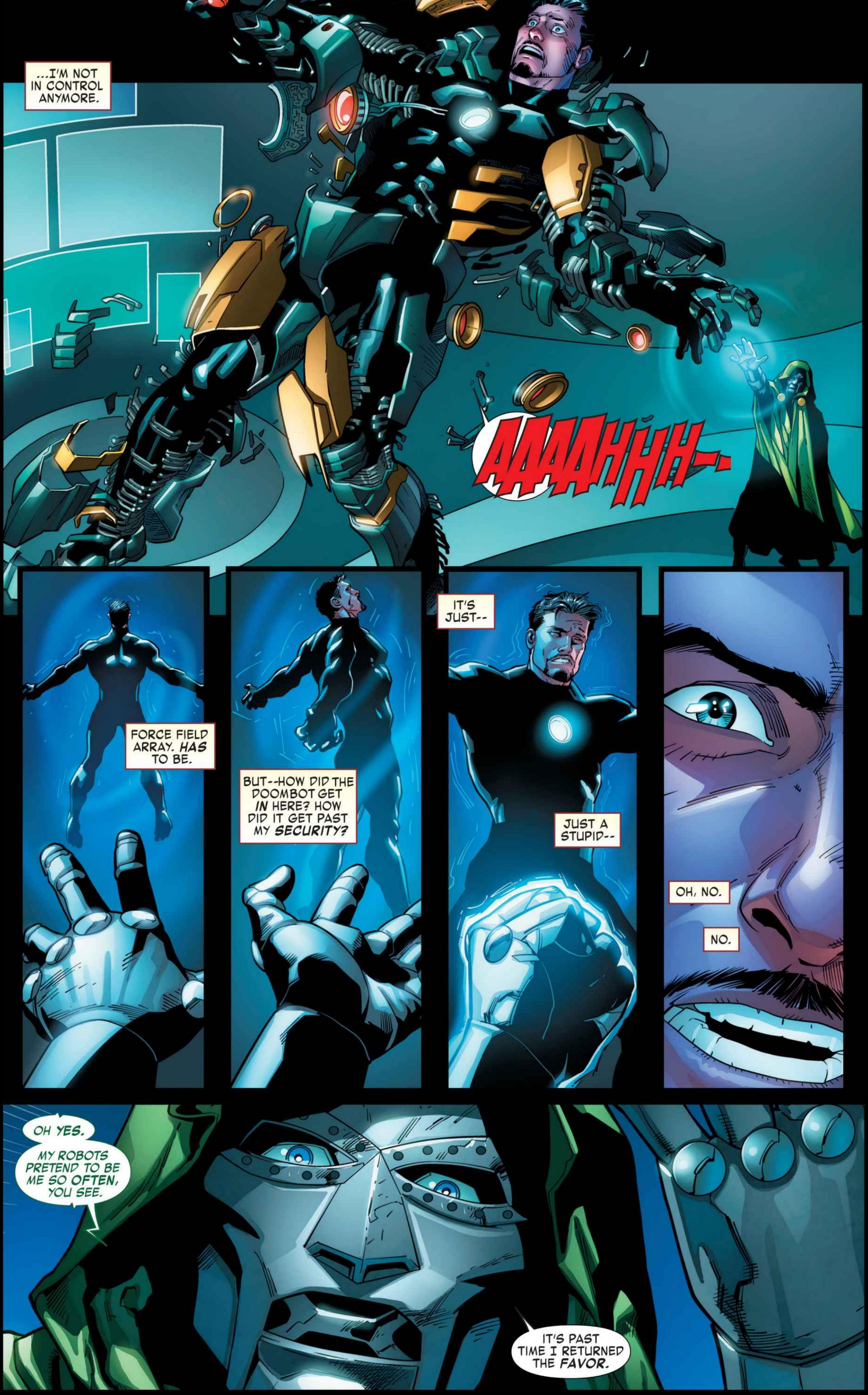

YOU DARE
TO SPEAK THIS WAY
TO DOOM?
YOU DARE?
B-DOOM
BKROOM
THEY'RE DESTROYING THE DRONES--
I KNOW--
OKAY, HERE THEY COME-- GET READY--
TONY?
TONY, THIS IS INSANE--IT'S OPEN WAR ON THE STREETS, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO GET KILLED--
I'M FINE--
IT--IT'S FINE. DON'T WORRY.
I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL.
UDARNIK? GO FIND THE HIGH GROUND.
WE NEED OUR BIG GUN.

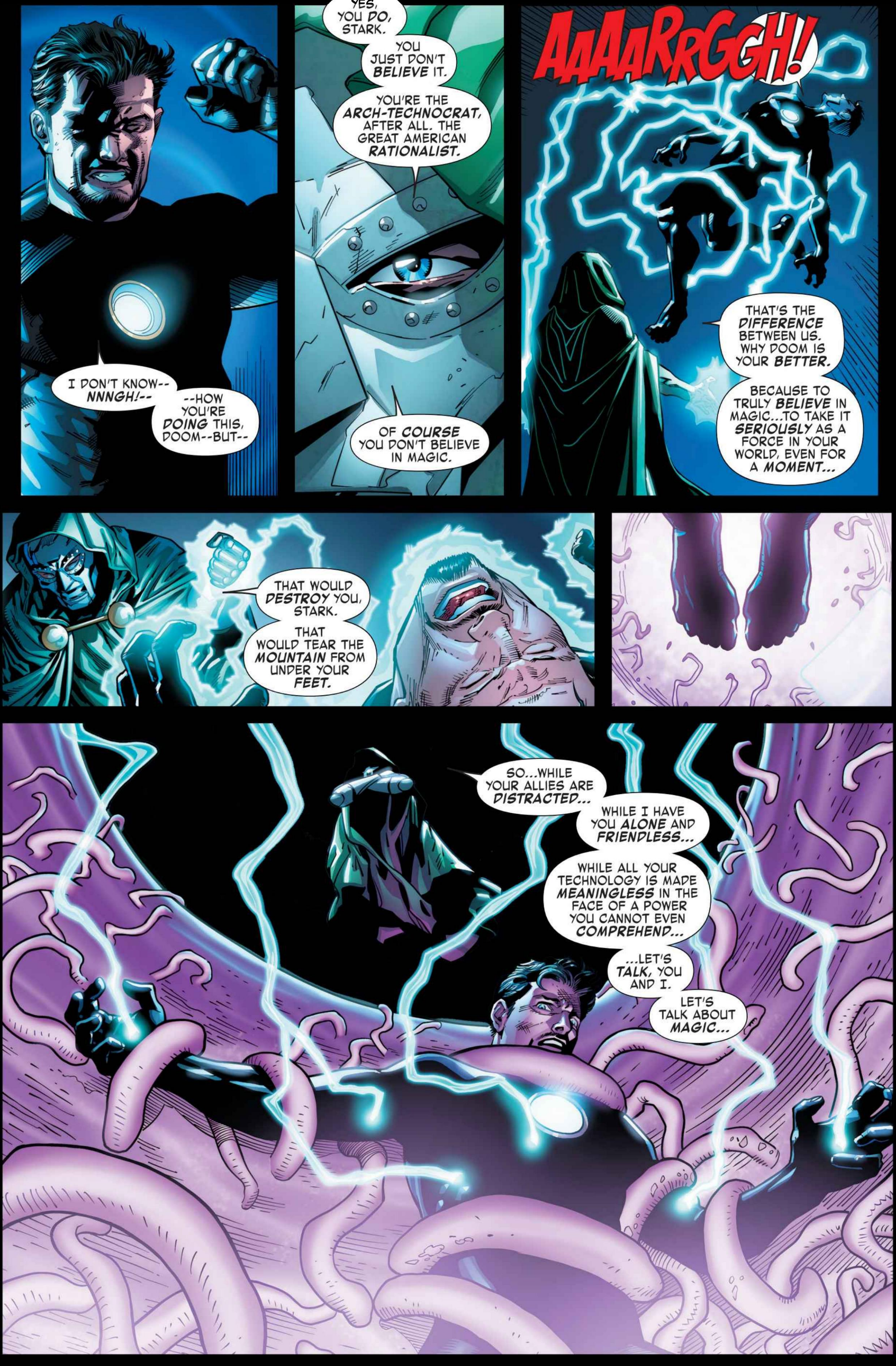

ONE DAY AGO.
THE "CRIMSON DYNAMO" LUNAR STATION.
TONY STARK'S LAB.
TONY? MAY I COME IN?
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU, TONY.
ABOUT YOUR PLANS.
...WHICH PLANS?
DOCTOR DOOM.
THIS WAR YOU'RE PLANNING.
OH.
THOSE PLANS.
IT'S JUST A POLICE ACTION, BUDDY--
YOU SAID NOBODY ELSE HAD TO LEAVE, TONY.
LOOK, RIGHT NOW THERE ARE PEOPLE ON EARTH WHO'D BE UP HERE IF DOOM WASN'T. HE'S SCARING PEOPLE AWAY FROM YOUR MOON, PAL.
AND HE'S NOT EVEN HERE, IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF STUPID--
--WELL, NOT ROBOTS LIKE YOU, BUT--
ARE YOU TELLING ME EVERYTHING, TONY?
SURE. SURE I AM. AND I JUST NEED YOU TO HELP ME WITH THIS ONE LITTLE THING, OKAY?
I MEAN, WE'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT? AREN'T WE?
AND FRIENDS SHOULD HELP EACH OTHER.
NOW.
UDARNIK IS MY DEPUTY HERE ON THE MOON.
HE'S...A LITTLE MESSED UP.
...YES, TONY.

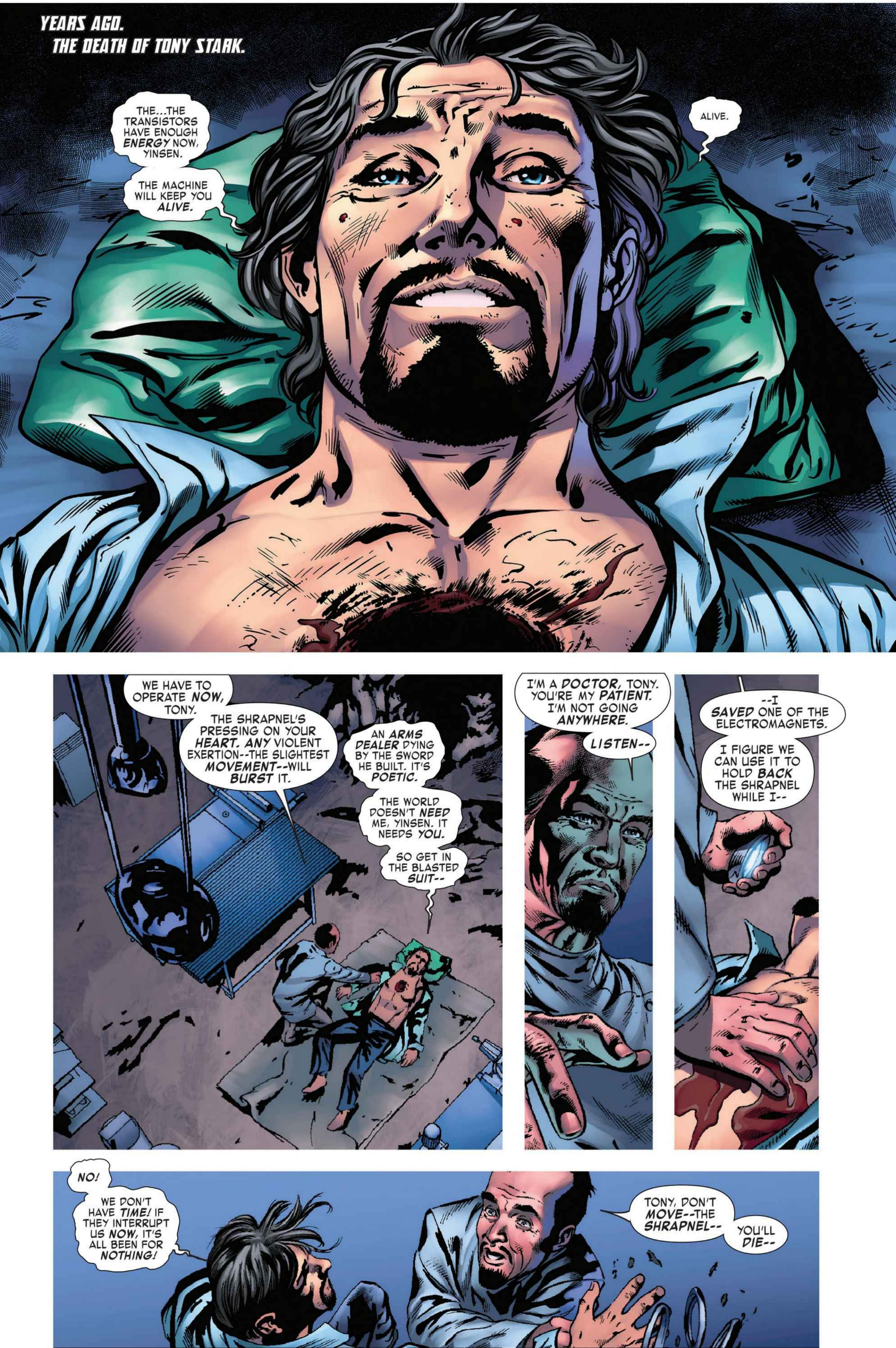

FRIENDS SHOULD HELP EACH OTHER.
HE WAS BUILT IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES BY LEONID KUZNETSOV--
THE GRANDFATHER OF EMOTIONAL PROGRAMMING-- WITH TWO BASIC MODES, ONE FOR EACH OF HIS FACES.
SICKLE AND HAMMER.
THE WORKER...
UDARNIK BUILDS...
TSSSHH
CLIK-CLAK
CLAK-CLAK
CLAK-CLATCH
...AND THE SOLDIER.
AND SHOCKWORKER... BREAKS!
TO ME, O MY BROTHERS!
BETWEEN THAT AND HIS ARMY OF "DROOGS"-- LITTLE WORKER-ROBOTS THAT CAN BUILD FOR HIM--
--OR FUSE THEMSELVES WITH HIM--
THIS IS MY MOON!
--I'M JUST GLAD HE'S ON MY SIDE.
OH, YES.
A GIGANTIC ROBOT IS MUCH SAFER FOR EVERYONE.
CORA...

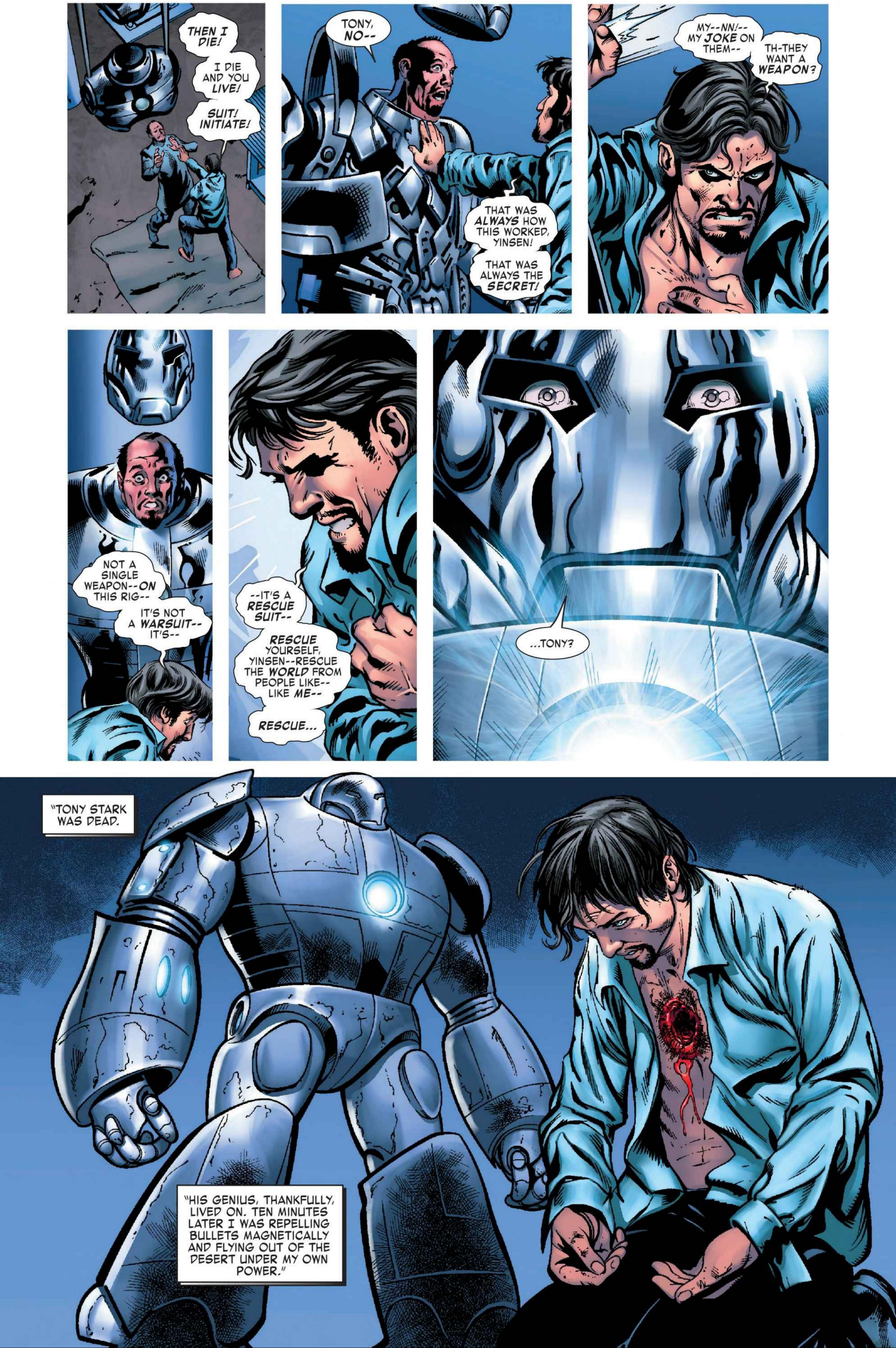

I'M IN CONTROL, OKAY? I'M HANDLING THIS.
EXCUSE ME--
RAARRGH!
--IF EVERYONE COULD PLEASE JUST EVACUATE IN A CALM AND ORDERLY FASHION--THIS SITUATION WILL BE RESOLVED SHORTLY--
--THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT--
HAMMER PROTOCOL ENGAGED!
SHOCKWORKER--
--BREAKS!
KA-THOOOMMM
MY MOON!
N-NO-- SKWRRZZ
I AM D-DOOM KKRZZT I WILL NOT DIE L-LIKE--
--IT HURRTTZZZ--
THERE.
SEE?
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

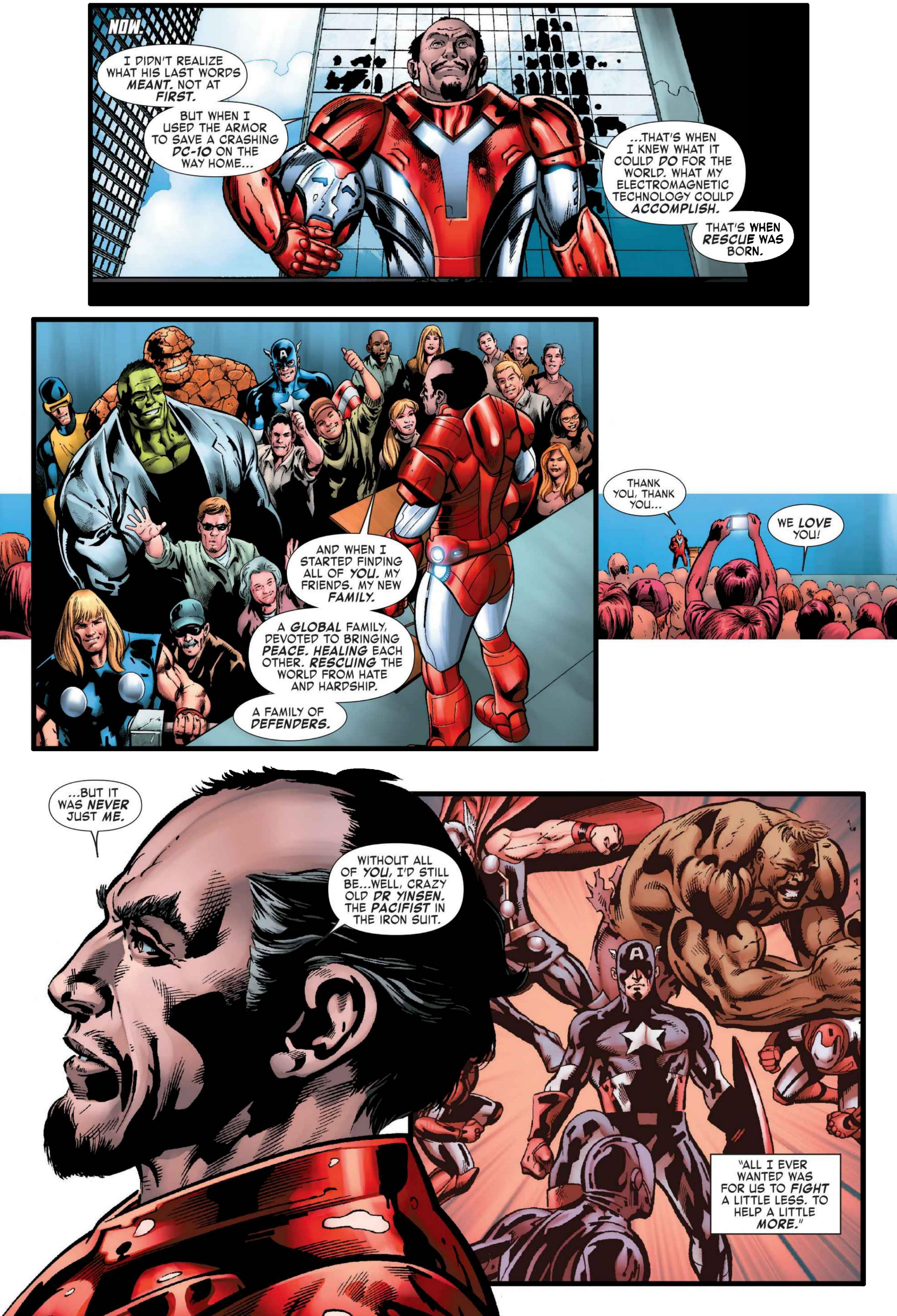

I AM SHERIFF IRON MAN.
AND I'M IN CONTROL.
TONY KNOWS BEST.
WHAT?
NOTHING. I'M FINE.
REALLY.
I DON'T KNOW, TONY. LATELY, YOU'VE BEEN ACTING LIKKRRZZTT--
LIKE WHAT? CORA?
YOU STILL THERE? I'VE LOST YOUR SIGNAL--
UDARNIK? BUDDY?
ARTHUR? ANY OF THE CIRCLE, PLEASE COME IN--
ANYBODY--
...ANYBODY?
OH, DEAR.
THE KING HAS LOST HIS PAWNS.
TRAGIC.
AND SUDDENLY...

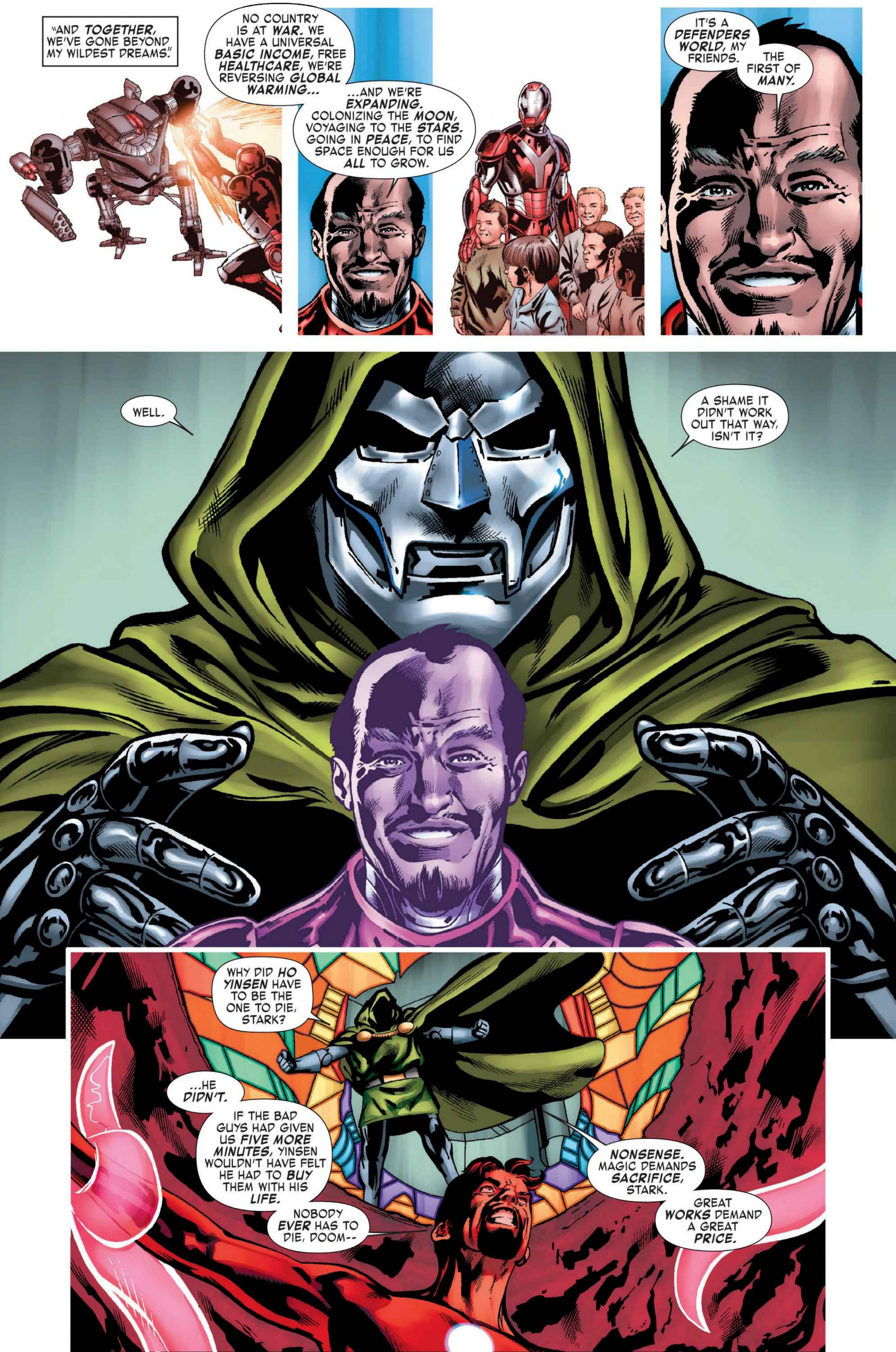

...I'M NOT IN CONTROL ANYMORE.
AAAAHHH--
FORCE FIELD ARRAY. *HAS* TO BE.
BUT--HOW DID THE DOOMBOT GET *IN* HERE? HOW DID IT GET PAST MY *SECURITY?*
IT'S JUST--
JUST A STUPID--
OH, NO.
NO.
OH *YES.*
MY ROBOTS PRETEND TO BE ME SO *OFTEN,* YOU SEE.
IT'S PAST TIME I RETURNED THE *FAVOR.*

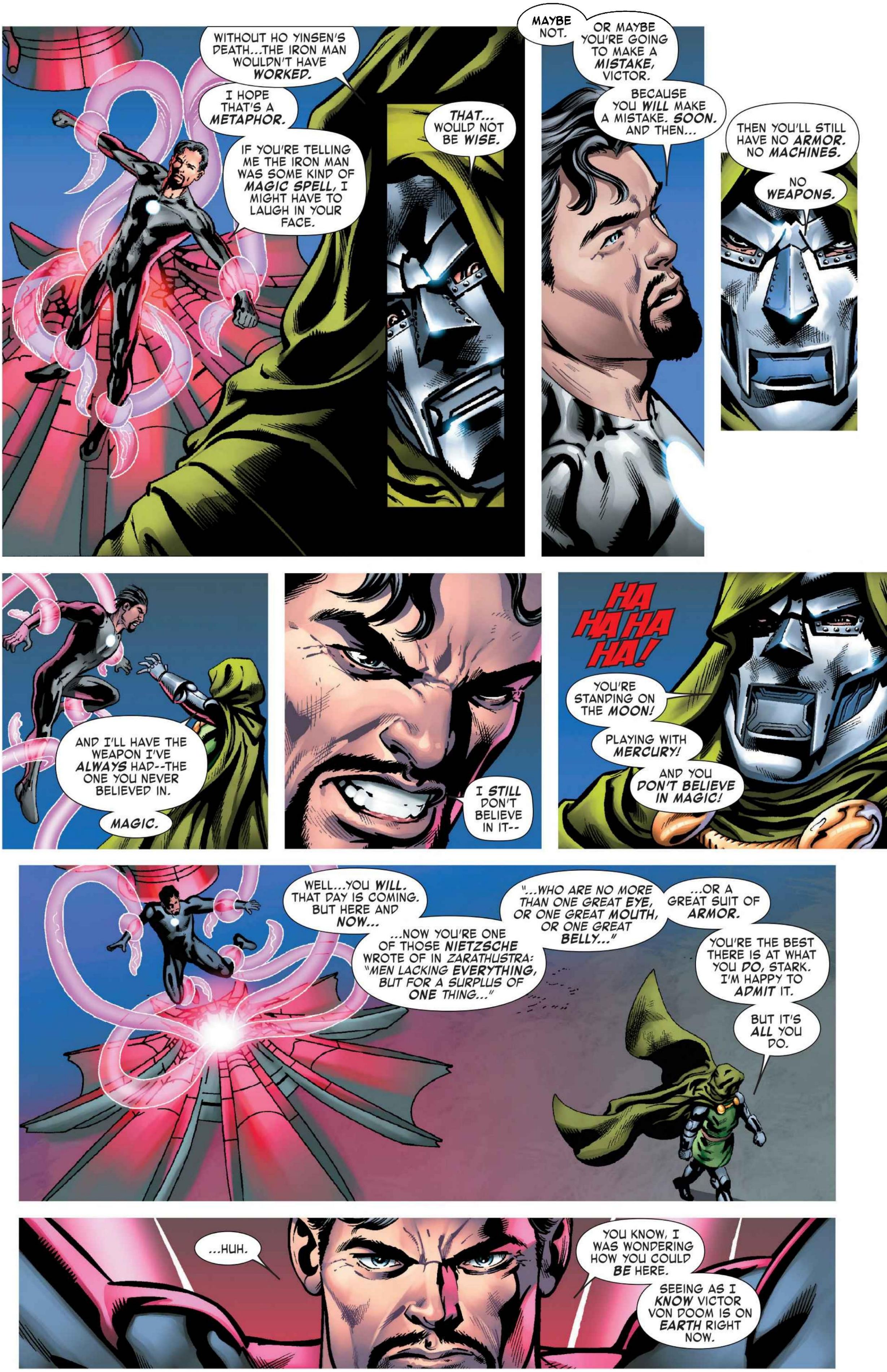

I DON'T KNOW-- NNNGH!--
--HOW YOU'RE DOING THIS, DOOM--BUT--
YES, YOU DO, STARK.
YOU JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT.
YOU'RE THE ARCH-TECHNOCRAT, AFTER ALL. THE GREAT AMERICAN RATIONALIST.
OF COURSE YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC.
AAAARRGGH!
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US. WHY DOOM IS YOUR BETTER.
BECAUSE TO TRULY BELIEVE IN MAGIC...TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AS A FORCE IN YOUR WORLD, EVEN FOR A MOMENT...
THAT WOULD DESTROY YOU, STARK.
THAT WOULD TEAR THE MOUNTAIN FROM UNDER YOUR FEET.
SO...WHILE YOUR ALLIES ARE DISTRACTED...
WHILE I HAVE YOU ALONE AND FRIENDLESS...
WHILE ALL YOUR TECHNOLOGY IS MADE MEANINGLESS IN THE FACE OF A POWER YOU CANNOT EVEN COMPREHEND...
...LET'S TALK, YOU AND I.
LET'S TALK ABOUT MAGIC...

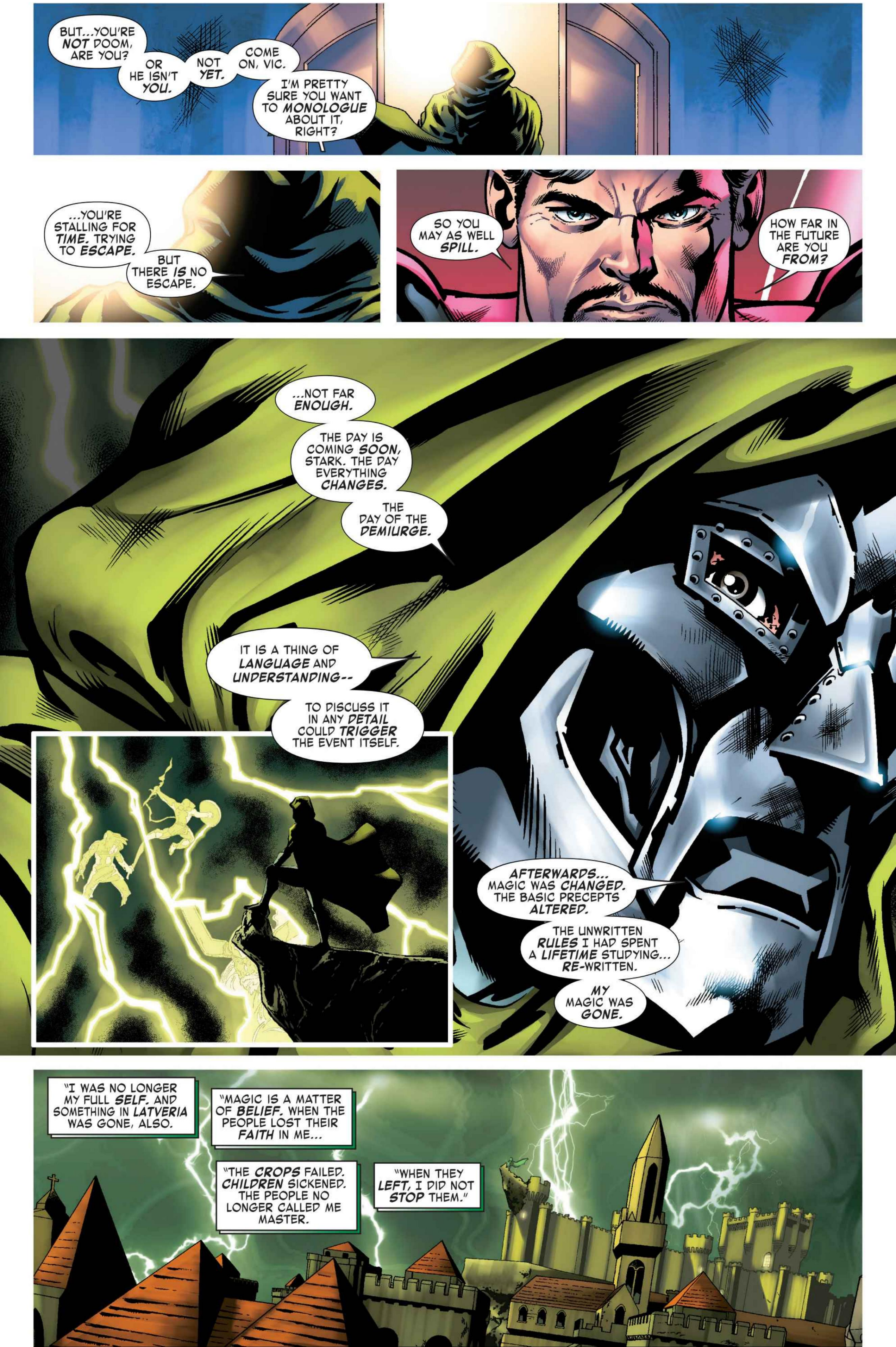

YEARS AGO.
THE DEATH OF TONY STARK.
THE...THE TRANSISTORS HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY NOW, YINSEN.
THE MACHINE WILL KEEP YOU ALIVE.
ALIVE.
WE HAVE TO OPERATE NOW, TONY.
THE SHRAPNEL'S PRESSING ON YOUR HEART. ANY VIOLENT EXERTION--THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT--WILL BURST IT.
AN ARMS DEALER DYING BY THE SWORD HE BUILT. IT'S POETIC.
THE WORLD DOESN'T NEED ME, YINSEN. IT NEEDS YOU.
SO GET IN THE BLASTED SUIT--
I'M A DOCTOR, TONY. YOU'RE MY PATIENT. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
LISTEN--
--I SAVED ONE OF THE ELECTROMAGNETS.
I FIGURE WE CAN USE IT TO HOLD BACK THE SHRAPNEL WHILE I--
NO!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME! IF THEY INTERRUPT US NOW, IT'S ALL BEEN FOR NOTHING!
TONY, DON'T MOVE--THE SHRAPNEL--
YOU'LL DIE--

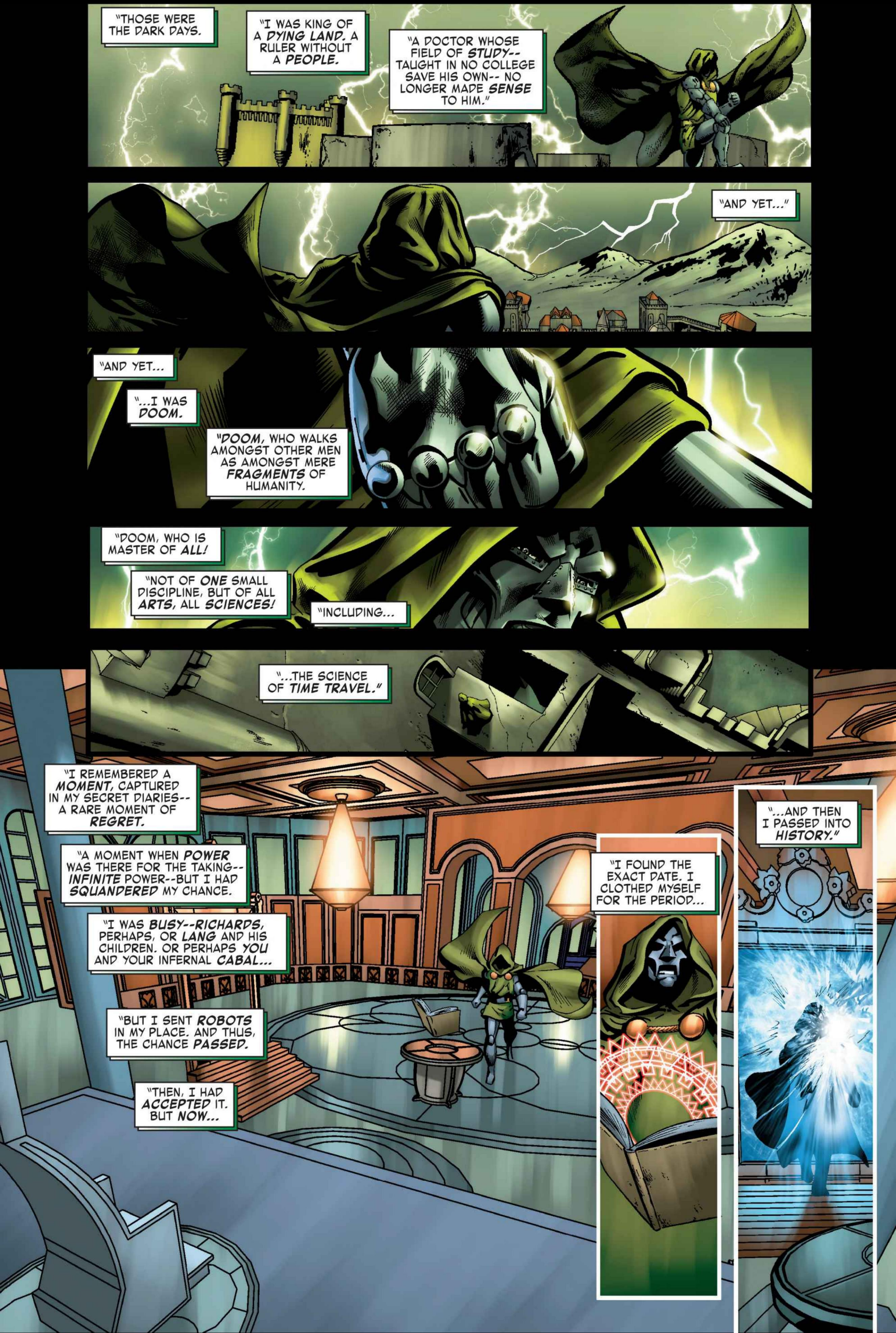

THEN I DIE!
I DIE AND YOU LIVE!
SUIT! INITIATE!
TONY, NO--
THAT WAS ALWAYS HOW THIS WORKED, YINSEN!
THAT WAS ALWAYS THE SECRET!
MY--NN!-- MY JOKE ON THEM--
TH-THEY WANT A WEAPON?
NOT A SINGLE WEAPON--ON THIS RIG--
IT'S NOT A WARSUIT-- IT'S--
--IT'S A RESCUE SUIT--
RESCUE YOURSELF, YINSEN--RESCUE THE WORLD FROM PEOPLE LIKE-- LIKE ME--
RESCUE...
...TONY?
"TONY STARK WAS DEAD.
"HIS GENIUS, THANKFULLY, LIVED ON. TEN MINUTES LATER I WAS REPELLING BULLETS MAGNETICALLY AND FLYING OUT OF THE DESERT UNDER MY OWN POWER."

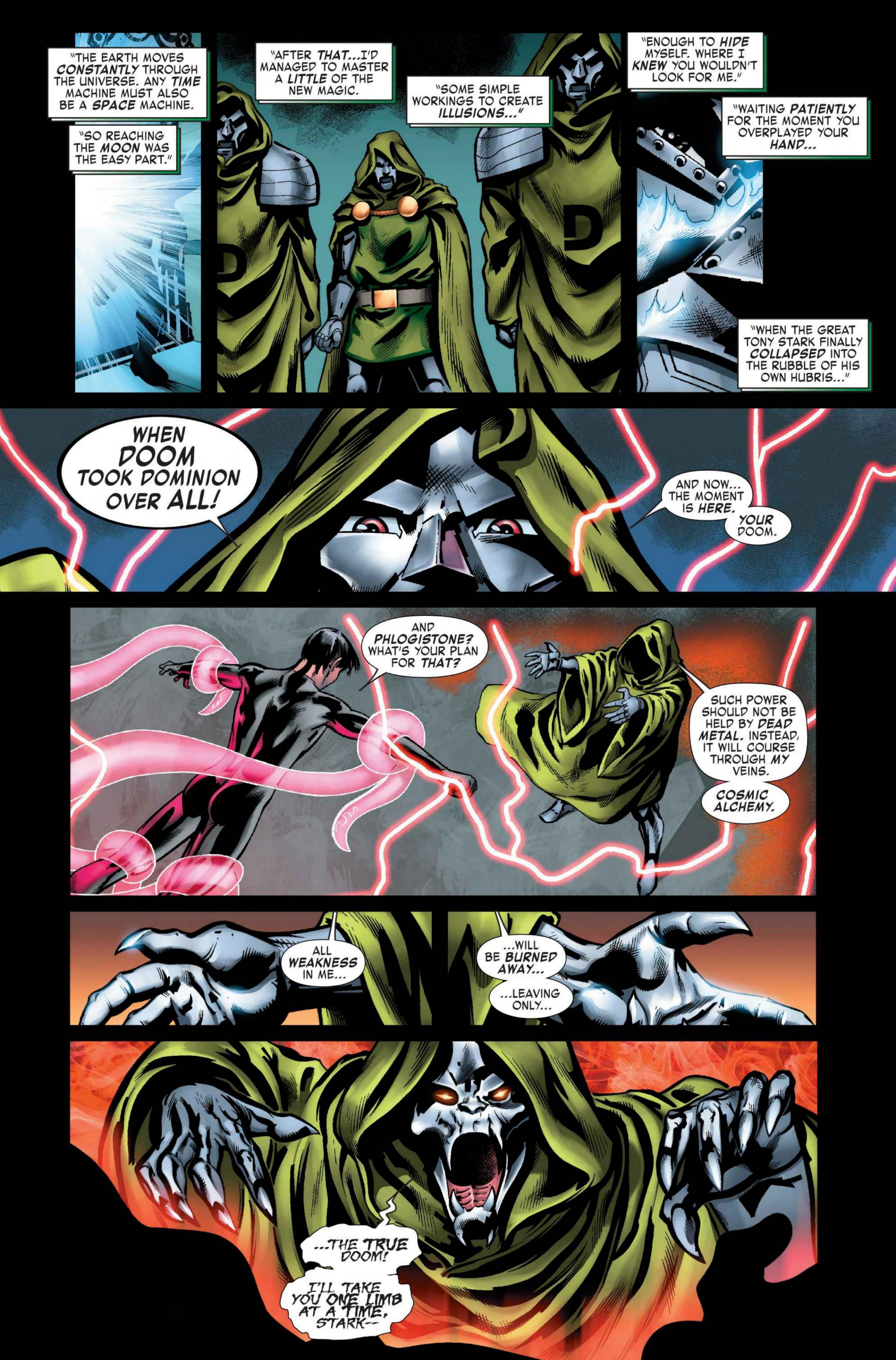

NOW.
I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT HIS LAST WORDS *MEANT.* NOT AT *FIRST.*
BUT WHEN I USED THE ARMOR TO SAVE A CRASHING *DC-10* ON THE WAY HOME...
...THAT'S WHEN I KNEW WHAT IT COULD *DO* FOR THE WORLD. WHAT MY ELECTROMAGNETIC TECHNOLOGY COULD *ACCOMPLISH.*
THAT'S WHEN *RESCUE* WAS BORN.
AND WHEN I STARTED FINDING ALL OF *YOU.* MY FRIENDS. MY NEW *FAMILY.*
A *GLOBAL* FAMILY, DEVOTED TO BRINGING *PEACE. HEALING* EACH OTHER. *RESCUING* THE WORLD FROM HATE AND HARDSHIP.
A FAMILY OF *DEFENDERS.*
THANK YOU, THANK YOU...
WE *LOVE* YOU!
...BUT IT WAS *NEVER* JUST *ME.*
WITHOUT ALL OF *YOU,* I'D STILL BE...WELL, CRAZY OLD *DR YINSEN.* THE *PACIFIST* IN THE IRON SUIT.
"ALL I EVER WANTED WAS FOR US TO *FIGHT* A LITTLE LESS. TO HELP A LITTLE *MORE.*"

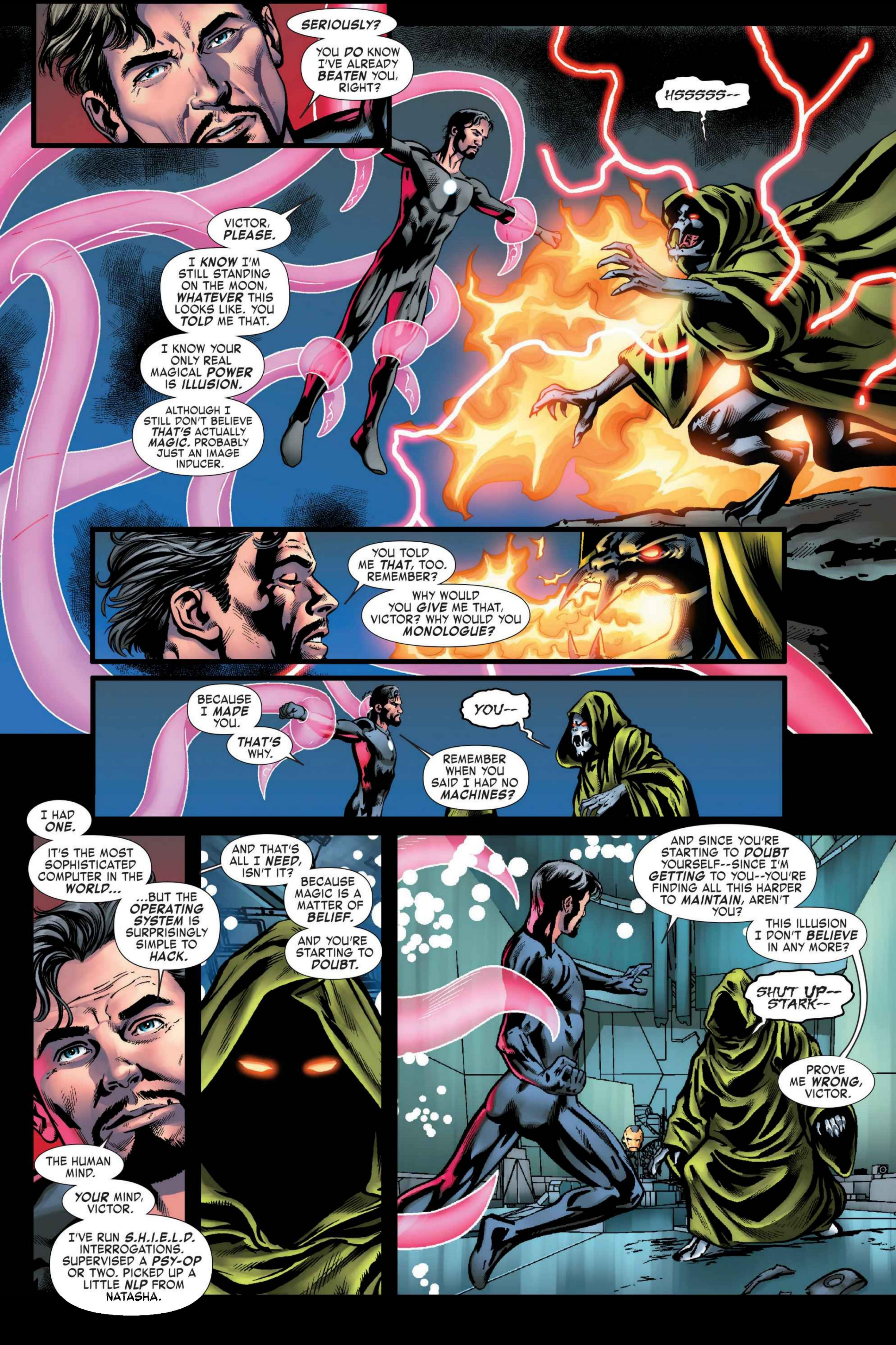

"AND TOGETHER, WE'VE GONE BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS."
NO COUNTRY IS AT WAR. WE HAVE A UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME, FREE HEALTHCARE, WE'RE REVERSING GLOBAL WARMING...
...AND WE'RE EXPANDING. COLONIZING THE MOON, VOYAGING TO THE STARS. GOING IN PEACE, TO FIND SPACE ENOUGH FOR US ALL TO GROW.
IT'S A DEFENDERS WORLD, MY FRIENDS.
THE FIRST OF MANY.
WELL.
A SHAME IT DIDN'T WORK OUT THAT WAY, ISN'T IT?
WHY DID HO YINSEN HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO DIE, STARK?
...HE DIDN'T.
IF THE BAD GUYS HAD GIVEN US FIVE MORE MINUTES, YINSEN WOULDN'T HAVE FELT HE HAD TO BUY THEM WITH HIS LIFE.
NOBODY EVER HAS TO DIE, DOOM--
NONSENSE. MAGIC DEMANDS SACRIFICE, STARK.
GREAT WORKS DEMAND A GREAT PRICE.

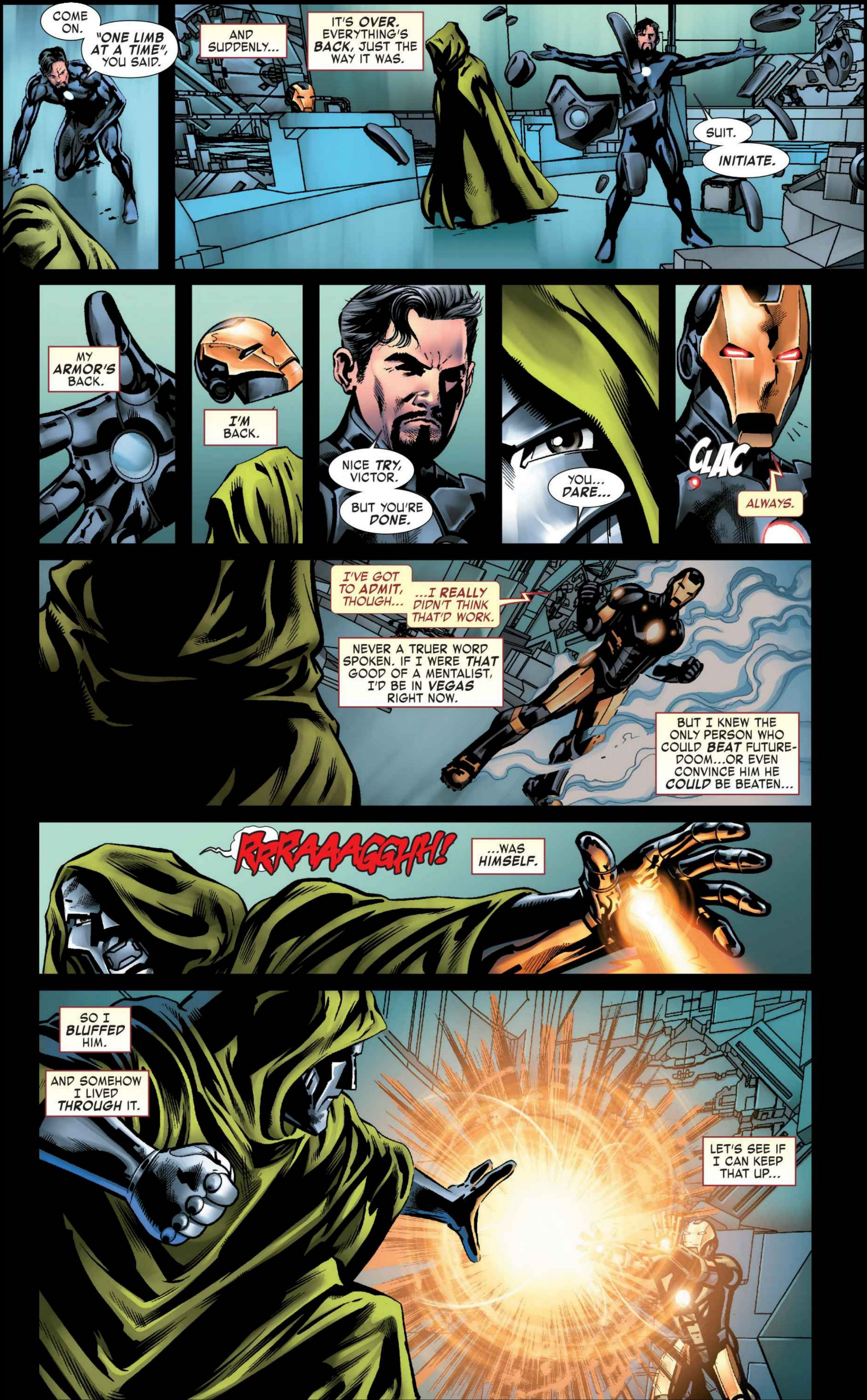

WITHOUT HO YINSEN'S DEATH...THE IRON MAN WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED.
I HOPE THAT'S A METAPHOR.
IF YOU'RE TELLING ME THE IRON MAN WAS SOME KIND OF MAGIC SPELL, I MIGHT HAVE TO LAUGH IN YOUR FACE.
THAT... WOULD NOT BE WISE.
MAYBE NOT.
OR MAYBE YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE A MISTAKE, VICTOR.
BECAUSE YOU WILL MAKE A MISTAKE. SOON. AND THEN...
THEN YOU'LL STILL HAVE NO ARMOR. NO MACHINES.
NO WEAPONS.
AND I'LL HAVE THE WEAPON I'VE ALWAYS HAD--THE ONE YOU NEVER BELIEVED IN.
MAGIC.
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IN IT--
HA HA HA HA!
YOU'RE STANDING ON THE MOON!
PLAYING WITH MERCURY!
AND YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC!
WELL...YOU WILL. THAT DAY IS COMING. BUT HERE AND NOW...
...NOW YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE NIETZSCHE WROTE OF IN ZARATHUSTRA: "MEN LACKING EVERYTHING, BUT FOR A SURPLUS OF ONE THING..."
"...WHO ARE NO MORE THAN ONE GREAT EYE, OR ONE GREAT MOUTH, OR ONE GREAT BELLY..."
...OR A GREAT SUIT OF ARMOR.
YOU'RE THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT YOU DO, STARK. I'M HAPPY TO ADMIT IT.
BUT IT'S ALL YOU DO.
...HUH.
YOU KNOW, I WAS WONDERING HOW YOU COULD BE HERE.
SEEING AS I KNOW VICTOR VON DOOM IS ON EARTH RIGHT NOW.

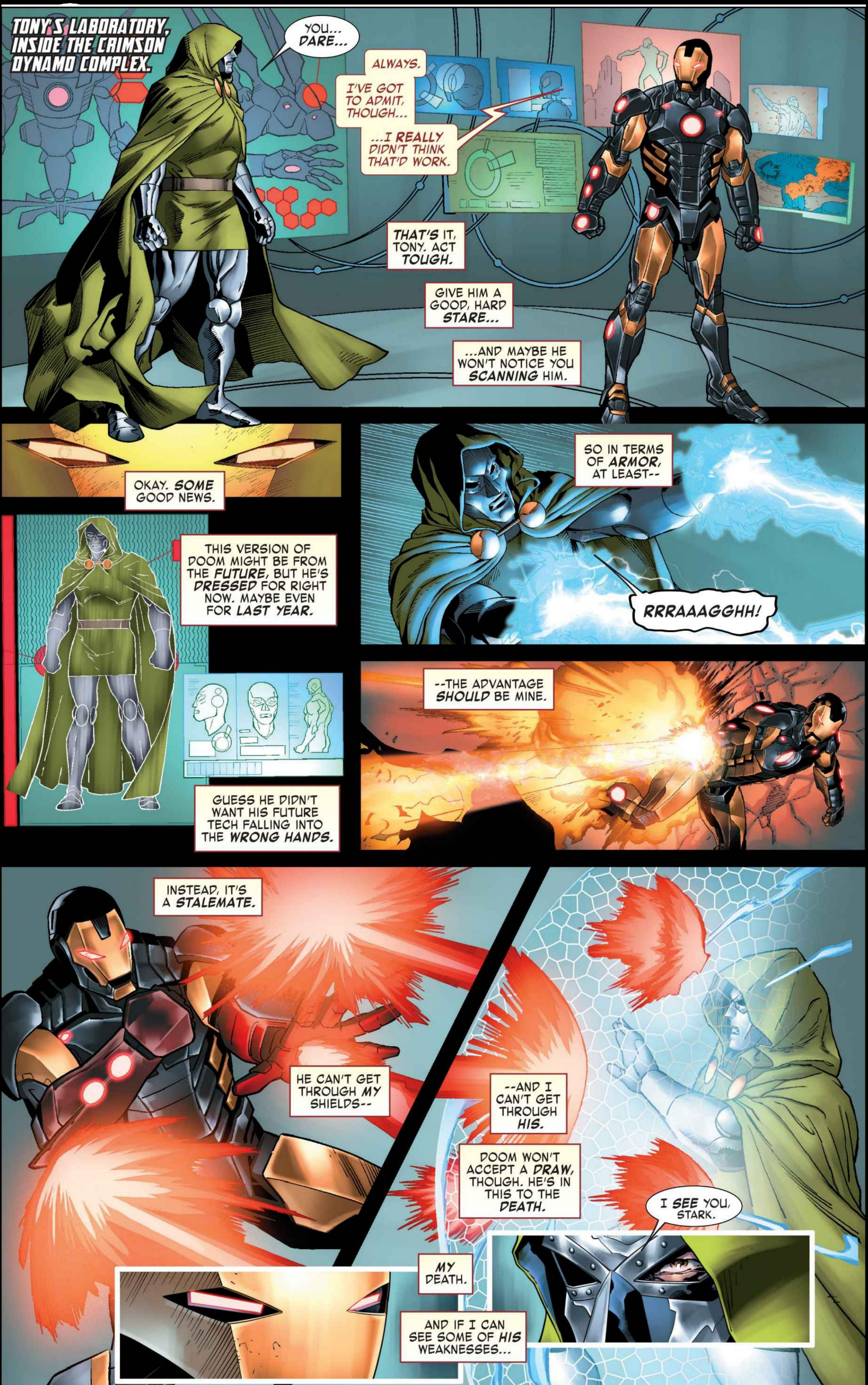

BUT...YOU'RE NOT DOOM, ARE YOU?
OR HE ISN'T YOU.
NOT YET.
COME ON, VIC.
I'M PRETTY SURE YOU WANT TO MONOLOGUE ABOUT IT, RIGHT?
...YOU'RE STALLING FOR TIME. TRYING TO ESCAPE.
BUT THERE IS NO ESCAPE.
SO YOU MAY AS WELL SPILL.
HOW FAR IN THE FUTURE ARE YOU FROM?
...NOT FAR ENOUGH.
THE DAY IS COMING SOON, STARK. THE DAY EVERYTHING CHANGES.
THE DAY OF THE DEMIURGE.
IT IS A THING OF LANGUAGE AND UNDERSTANDING--
TO DISCUSS IT IN ANY DETAIL COULD TRIGGER THE EVENT ITSELF.
AFTERWARDS... MAGIC WAS CHANGED. THE BASIC PRECEPTS ALTERED.
THE UNWRITTEN RULES I HAD SPENT A LIFETIME STUDYING... RE-WRITTEN.
MY MAGIC WAS GONE.
"I WAS NO LONGER MY FULL SELF. AND SOMETHING IN LATVERIA WAS GONE, ALSO.
"MAGIC IS A MATTER OF BELIEF. WHEN THE PEOPLE LOST THEIR FAITH IN ME...
"THE CROPS FAILED. CHILDREN SICKENED. THE PEOPLE NO LONGER CALLED ME MASTER.
"WHEN THEY LEFT, I DID NOT STOP THEM."

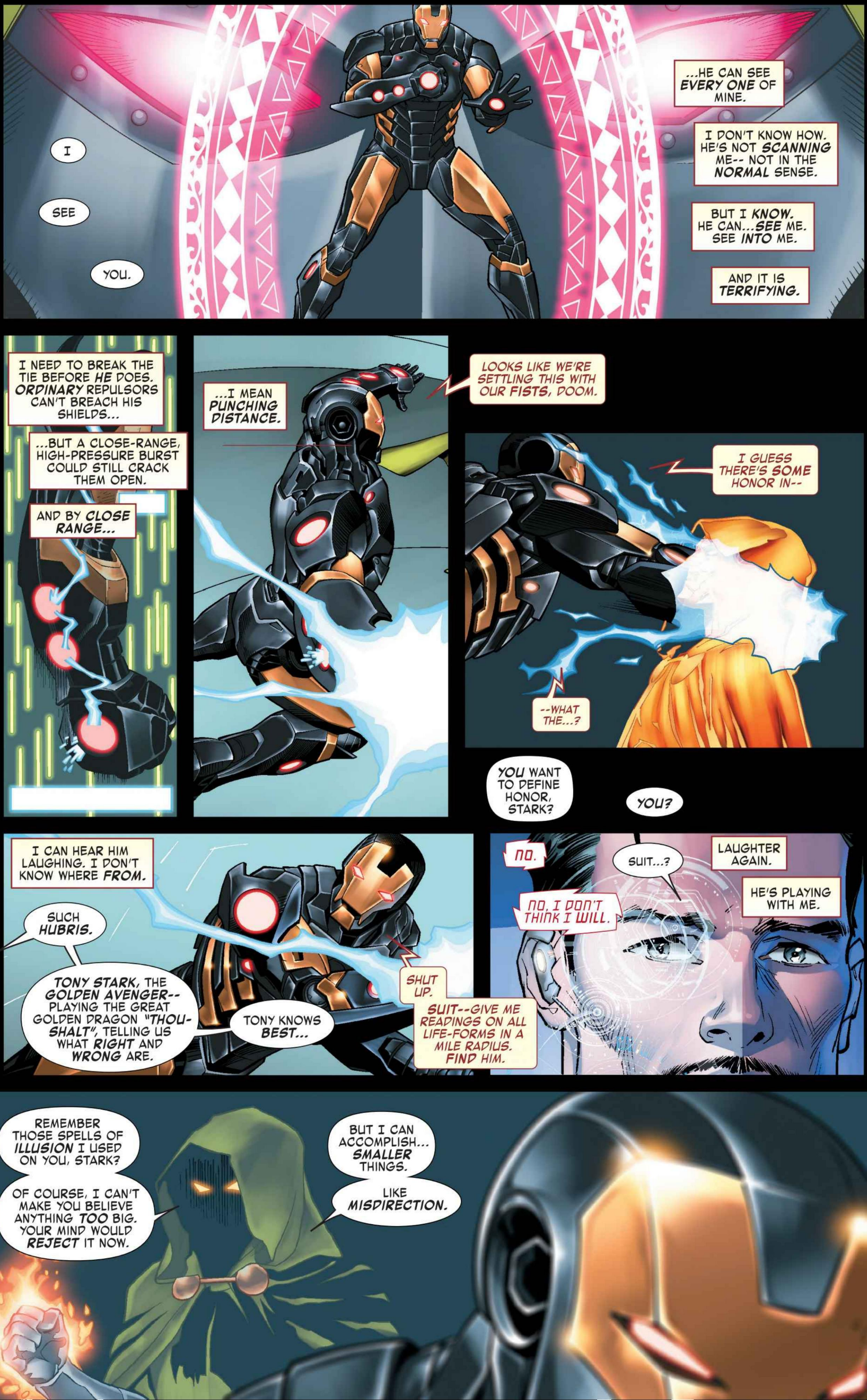

"THOSE WERE THE DARK DAYS.
"I WAS KING OF A *DYING LAND.* A RULER WITHOUT A *PEOPLE.*
"A DOCTOR WHOSE FIELD OF *STUDY*-- TAUGHT IN NO COLLEGE SAVE HIS OWN-- NO LONGER MADE *SENSE* TO HIM."
"AND YET..."
"AND YET...
"...I WAS *DOOM.*
"*DOOM,* WHO WALKS AMONGST OTHER MEN AS AMONGST MERE *FRAGMENTS* OF HUMANITY.
"DOOM, WHO IS MASTER OF *ALL!*
"NOT OF *ONE* SMALL DISCIPLINE, BUT OF ALL *ARTS,* ALL *SCIENCES!*
"INCLUDING...
"...THE SCIENCE OF *TIME TRAVEL."*
"I REMEMBERED A *MOMENT,* CAPTURED IN MY SECRET DIARIES-- A RARE MOMENT OF *REGRET.*
"A MOMENT WHEN *POWER* WAS THERE FOR THE TAKING-- *INFINITE* POWER--BUT I HAD *SQUANDERED* MY CHANCE.
"I WAS *BUSY--RICHARDS,* PERHAPS, OR *LANG* AND HIS CHILDREN. OR PERHAPS *YOU* AND YOUR INFERNAL *CABAL...*
"BUT I SENT *ROBOTS* IN MY PLACE. AND THUS, THE CHANCE *PASSED.*
"THEN, I HAD *ACCEPTED* IT. BUT *NOW...*
"I FOUND THE EXACT DATE. I CLOTHED MYSELF FOR THE PERIOD...
"...AND THEN I PASSED INTO *HISTORY."*

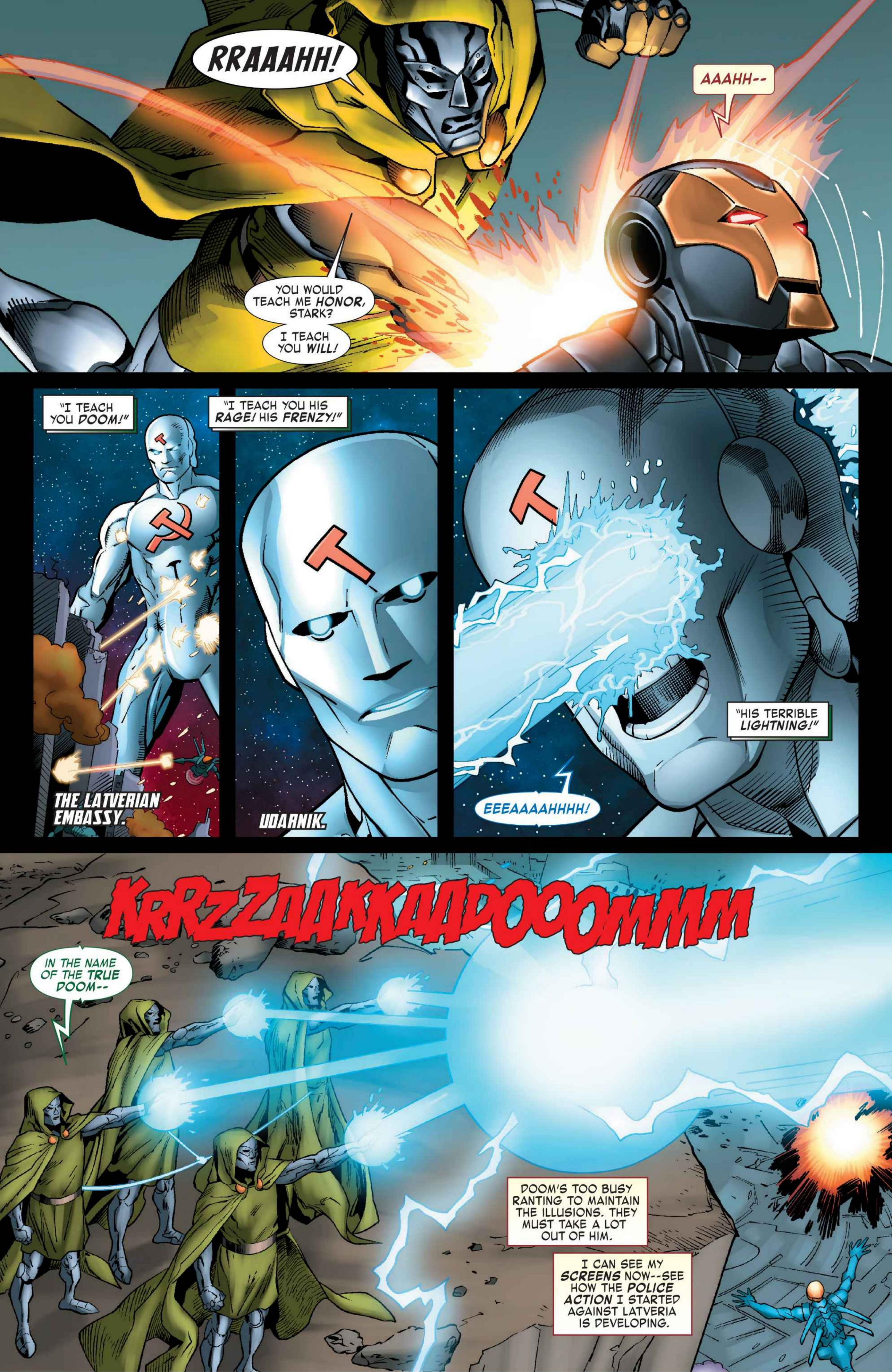

"THE EARTH MOVES *CONSTANTLY* THROUGH THE UNIVERSE. ANY *TIME* MACHINE MUST ALSO BE A *SPACE* MACHINE.
"SO REACHING THE *MOON* WAS THE EASY PART."
"AFTER *THAT*...I'D MANAGED TO MASTER A *LITTLE* OF THE NEW MAGIC.
"SOME SIMPLE WORKINGS TO CREATE *ILLUSIONS*..."
"ENOUGH TO *HIDE* MYSELF. WHERE I *KNEW* YOU WOULDN'T LOOK FOR ME."
"WAITING *PATIENTLY* FOR THE MOMENT YOU OVERPLAYED YOUR *HAND*...
"WHEN THE GREAT TONY STARK FINALLY *COLLAPSED* INTO THE RUBBLE OF HIS OWN HUBRIS..."
WHEN **DOOM** TOOK DOMINION OVER **ALL!**
AND NOW... THE MOMENT IS *HERE*. *YOUR* DOOM.
AND *PHLOGISTONE?* WHAT'S YOUR PLAN FOR *THAT?*
SUCH POWER SHOULD NOT BE HELD BY *DEAD METAL*. INSTEAD, IT WILL COURSE THROUGH *MY* VEINS.
COSMIC ALCHEMY.
ALL *WEAKNESS* IN ME...
...WILL BE *BURNED* AWAY...
...LEAVING ONLY...
...THE **TRUE** DOOM!
I'LL TAKE YOU **ONE LIMB** AT A TIME, STARK--

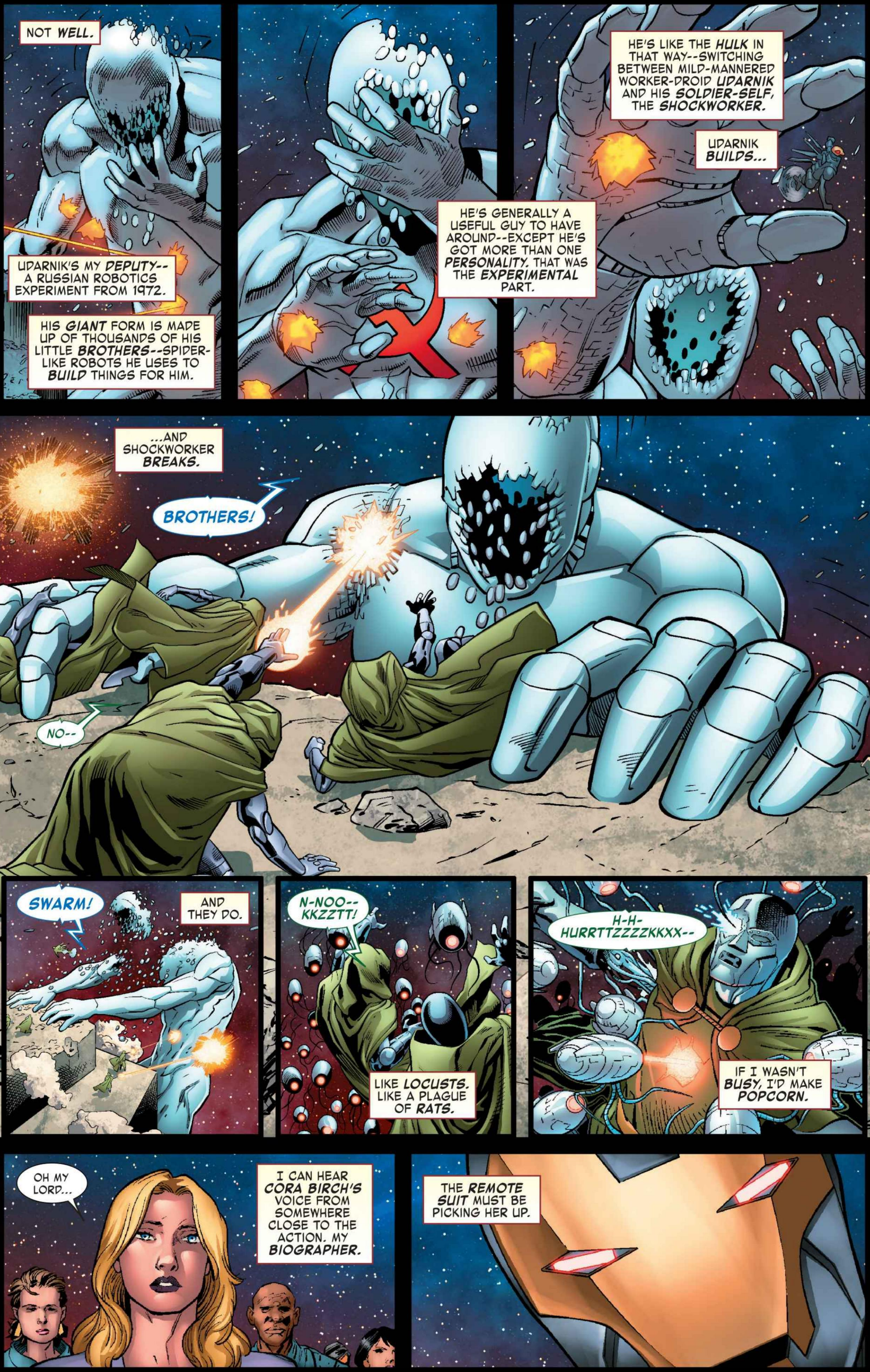

SERIOUSLY?
YOU DO KNOW I'VE ALREADY BEATEN YOU, RIGHT?
HSSSSS--
VICTOR, PLEASE.
I KNOW I'M STILL STANDING ON THE MOON, WHATEVER THIS LOOKS LIKE. YOU TOLD ME THAT.
I KNOW YOUR ONLY REAL MAGICAL POWER IS ILLUSION.
ALTHOUGH I STILL DON'T BELIEVE THAT'S ACTUALLY MAGIC. PROBABLY JUST AN IMAGE INDUCER.
YOU TOLD ME THAT, TOO. REMEMBER?
WHY WOULD YOU GIVE ME THAT, VICTOR? WHY WOULD YOU MONOLOGUE?
BECAUSE I MADE YOU.
THAT'S WHY.
YOU--
REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID I HAD NO MACHINES?
I HAD ONE.
IT'S THE MOST SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER IN THE WORLD...
...BUT THE OPERATING SYSTEM IS SURPRISINGLY SIMPLE TO HACK.
THE HUMAN MIND.
YOUR MIND, VICTOR.
I'VE RUN S.H.I.E.L.D. INTERROGATIONS. SUPERVISED A PSY-OP OR TWO. PICKED UP A LITTLE NLP FROM NATASHA.
AND THAT'S ALL I NEED, ISN'T IT?
BECAUSE MAGIC IS A MATTER OF BELIEF.
AND YOU'RE STARTING TO DOUBT.
AND SINCE YOU'RE STARTING TO DOUBT YOURSELF--SINCE I'M GETTING TO YOU--YOU'RE FINDING ALL THIS HARDER TO MAINTAIN, AREN'T YOU?
THIS ILLUSION I DON'T BELIEVE IN ANY MORE?
SHUT UP-- STARK--
PROVE ME WRONG, VICTOR.

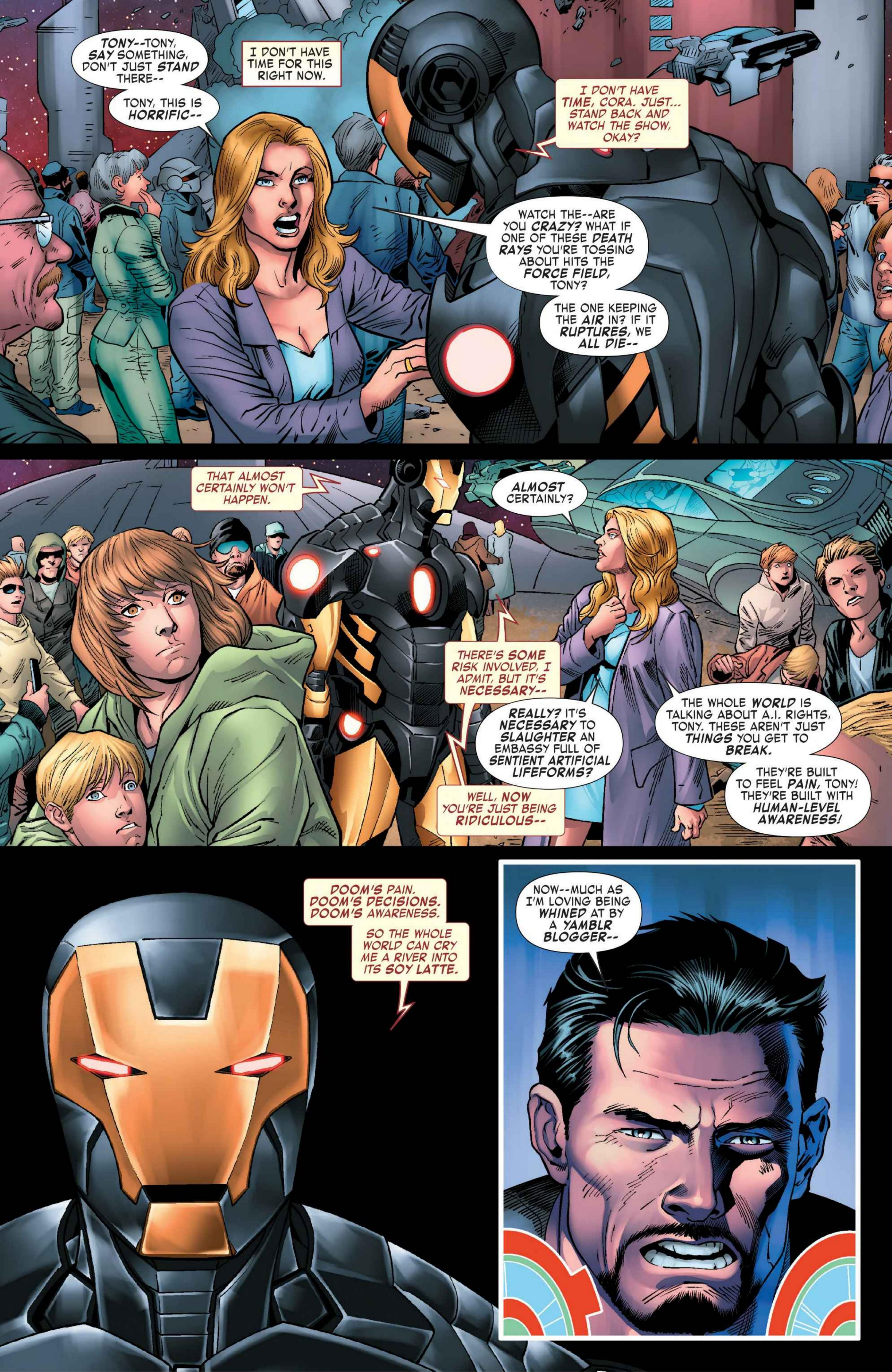

COME ON. *"ONE LIMB AT A TIME"*, YOU SAID.
AND SUDDENLY...
IT'S *OVER.* EVERYTHING'S *BACK*, JUST THE WAY IT WAS.
SUIT.
INITIATE.
MY *ARMOR'S* BACK.
I'M BACK.
NICE *TRY*, VICTOR.
BUT YOU'RE *DONE.*
YOU... *DARE...*
CLAC
ALWAYS.
I'VE GOT TO *ADMIT*, THOUGH...
...I REALLY DIDN'T THINK THAT'D WORK.
NEVER A TRUER WORD SPOKEN. IF I WERE *THAT* GOOD OF A MENTALIST, I'D BE IN *VEGAS* RIGHT NOW.
BUT I KNEW THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD *BEAT* FUTURE-DOOM...OR EVEN CONVINCE HIM HE *COULD* BE BEATEN...
RRRAAAAGGHH!
...WAS *HIMSELF.*
SO I *BLUFFED* HIM.
AND SOMEHOW I LIVED *THROUGH* IT.
LET'S SEE IF I CAN KEEP THAT UP...

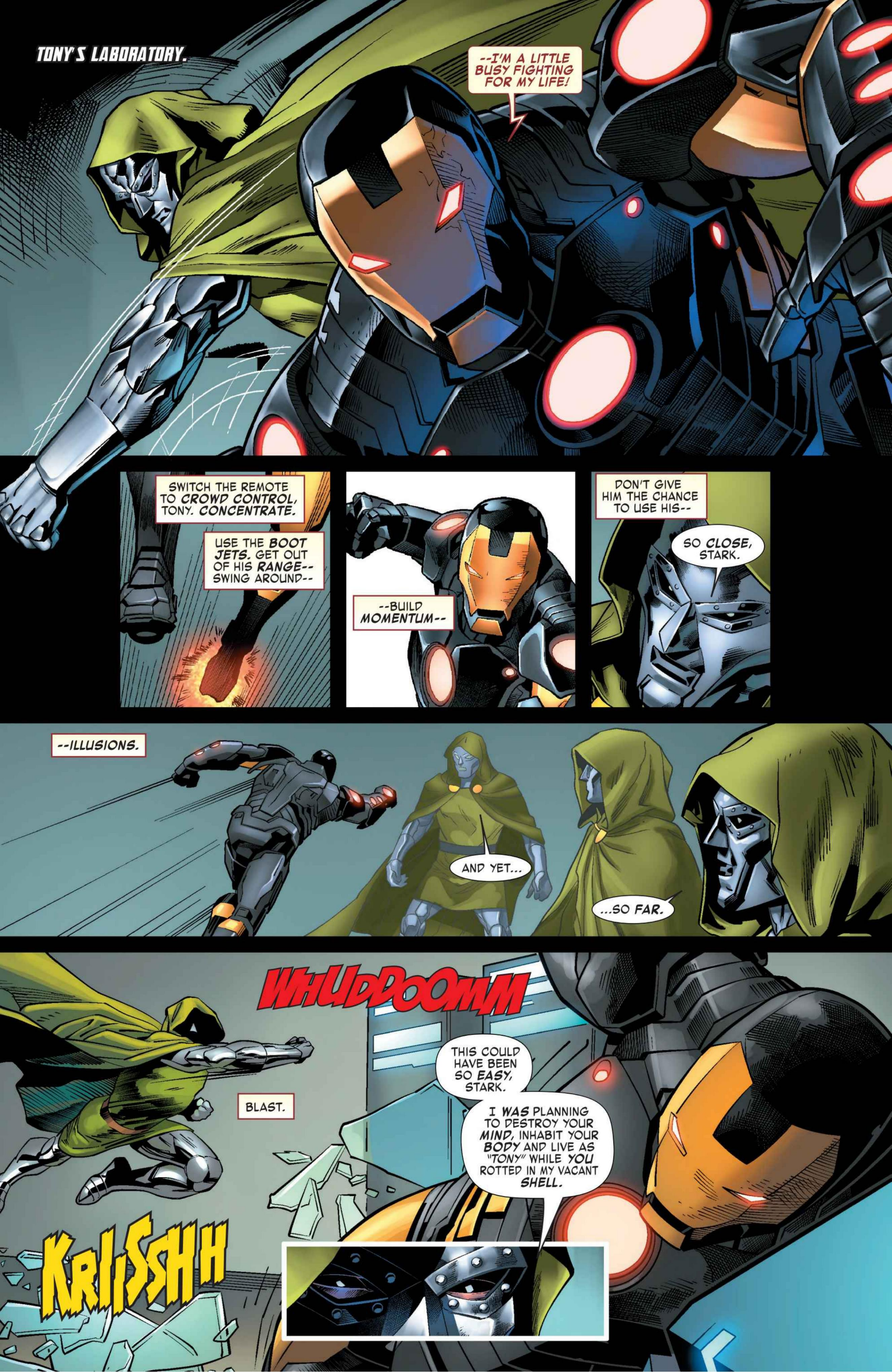

TONY'S LABORATORY, INSIDE THE CRIMSON DYNAMO COMPLEX.
YOU... DARE...
ALWAYS.
I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, THOUGH...
...I REALLY DIDN'T THINK THAT'D WORK.
THAT'S IT, TONY. ACT TOUGH.
GIVE HIM A GOOD, HARD STARE...
...AND MAYBE HE WON'T NOTICE YOU SCANNING HIM.
OKAY. SOME GOOD NEWS.
THIS VERSION OF DOOM MIGHT BE FROM THE FUTURE, BUT HE'S DRESSED FOR RIGHT NOW. MAYBE EVEN FOR LAST YEAR.
GUESS HE DIDN'T WANT HIS FUTURE TECH FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
SO IN TERMS OF ARMOR, AT LEAST--
RRRAAAGGHH!
--THE ADVANTAGE SHOULD BE MINE.
INSTEAD, IT'S A STALEMATE.
HE CAN'T GET THROUGH MY SHIELDS--
--AND I CAN'T GET THROUGH HIS.
DOOM WON'T ACCEPT A DRAW, THOUGH. HE'S IN THIS TO THE DEATH.
I SEE YOU, STARK.
MY DEATH.
AND IF I CAN SEE SOME OF HIS WEAKNESSES...

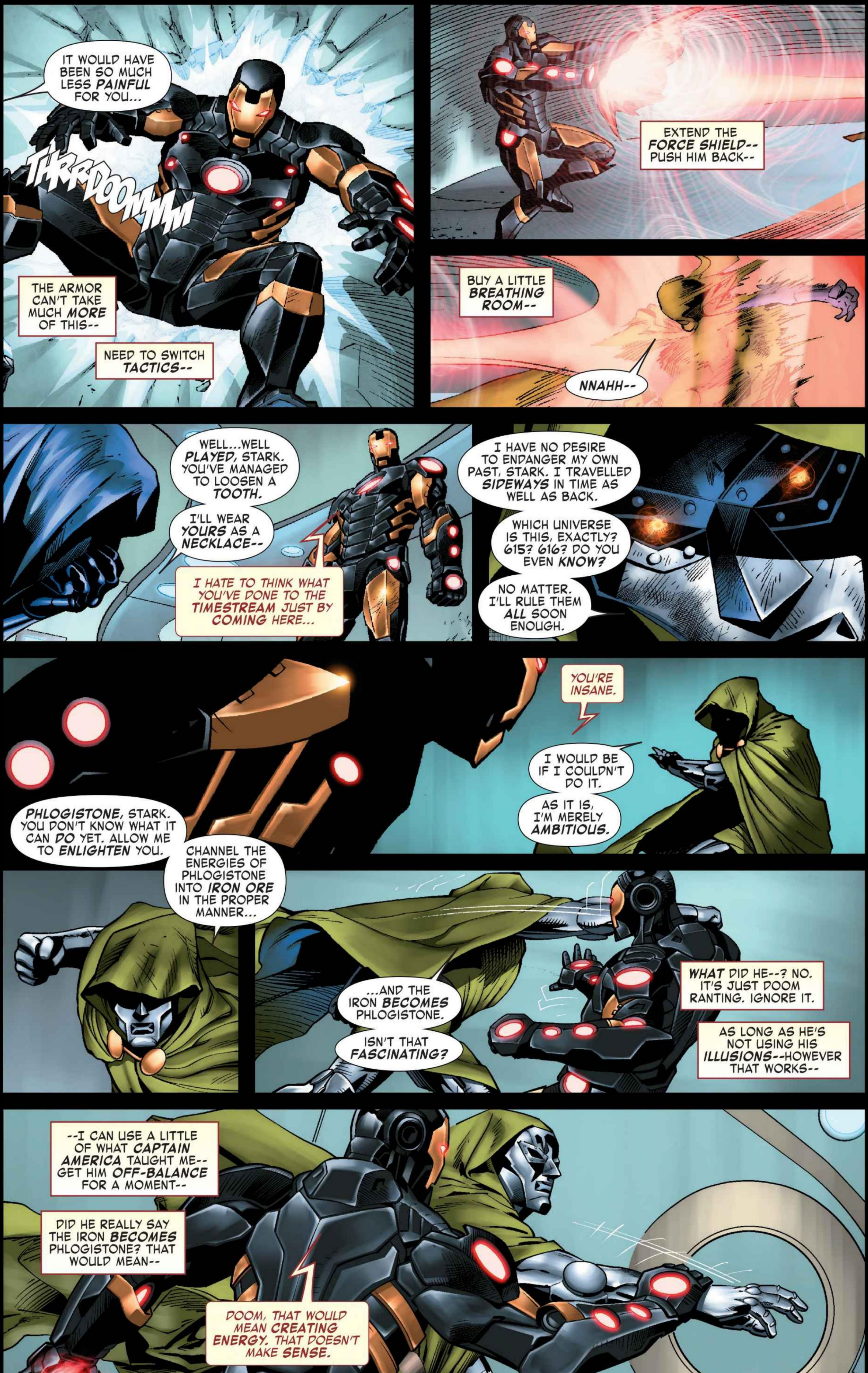

I
SEE
YOU.
...HE CAN SEE EVERY ONE OF MINE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW. HE'S NOT SCANNING ME-- NOT IN THE NORMAL SENSE.
BUT I KNOW. HE CAN...SEE ME. SEE INTO ME.
AND IT IS TERRIFYING.
I NEED TO BREAK THE TIE BEFORE HE DOES. ORDINARY REPULSORS CAN'T BREACH HIS SHIELDS...
...BUT A CLOSE-RANGE, HIGH-PRESSURE BURST COULD STILL CRACK THEM OPEN.
AND BY CLOSE RANGE...
...I MEAN PUNCHING DISTANCE.
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE SETTLING THIS WITH OUR FISTS, DOOM.
I GUESS THERE'S SOME HONOR IN--
--WHAT THE...?
YOU WANT TO DEFINE HONOR, STARK?
YOU?
I CAN HEAR HIM LAUGHING. I DON'T KNOW WHERE FROM.
SUCH HUBRIS.
TONY STARK, THE GOLDEN AVENGER-- PLAYING THE GREAT GOLDEN DRAGON "THOU-SHALT", TELLING US WHAT RIGHT AND WRONG ARE.
TONY KNOWS BEST...
SHUT UP.
SUIT--GIVE ME READINGS ON ALL LIFE-FORMS IN A MILE RADIUS. FIND HIM.
NO.
SUIT...?
NO, I DON'T THINK I WILL.
LAUGHTER AGAIN.
HE'S PLAYING WITH ME.
REMEMBER THOSE SPELLS OF ILLUSION I USED ON YOU, STARK?
OF COURSE, I CAN'T MAKE YOU BELIEVE ANYTHING TOO BIG. YOUR MIND WOULD REJECT IT NOW.
BUT I CAN ACCOMPLISH... SMALLER THINGS.
LIKE MISDIRECTION.

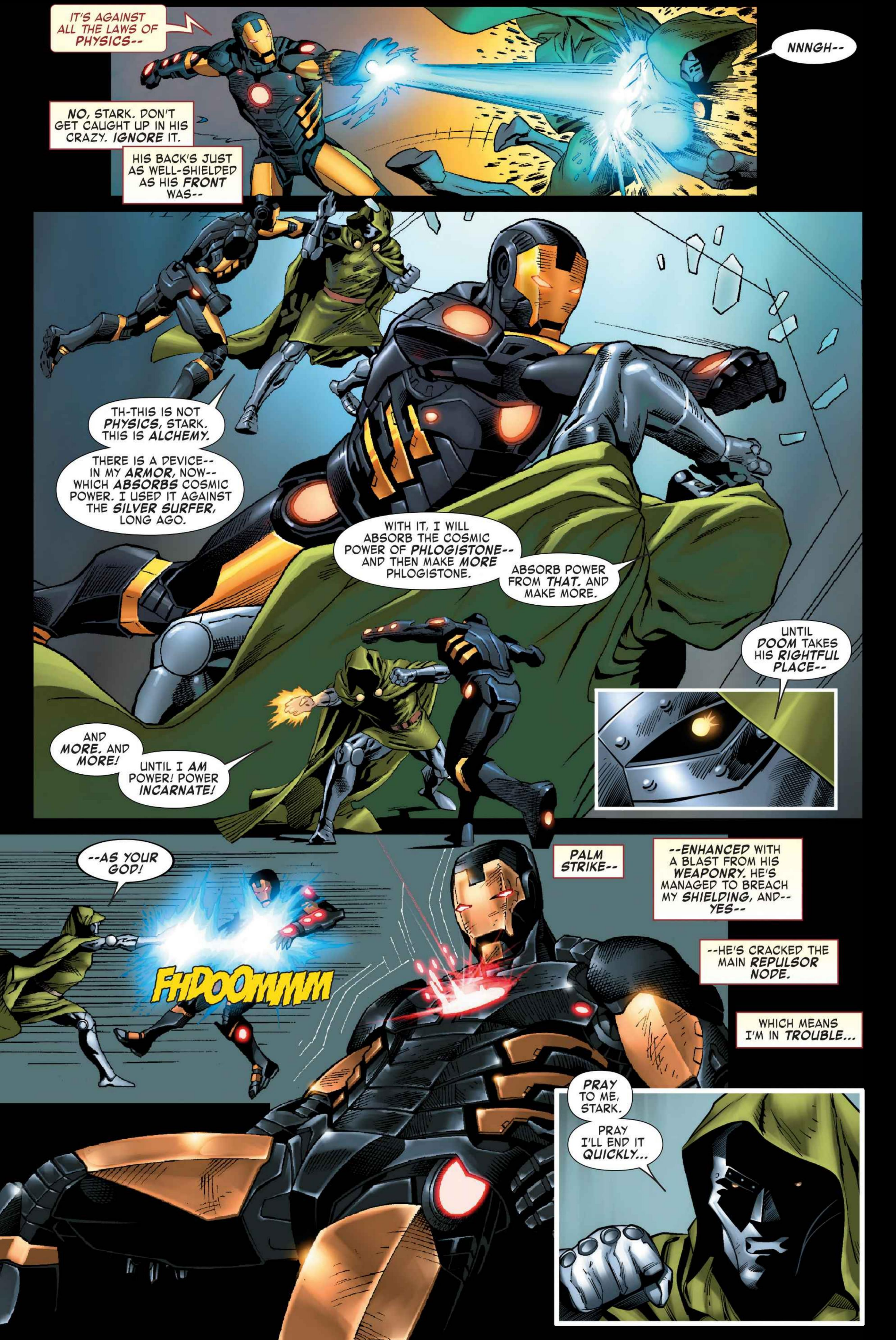

RRAAAHH!
AAAHH--
YOU WOULD TEACH ME HONOR, STARK?
I TEACH YOU WILL!
"I TEACH YOU DOOM!"
THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY.
"I TEACH YOU HIS RAGE! HIS FRENZY!"
UDARNIK.
"HIS TERRIBLE LIGHTNING!"
EEEAAAAHHHH!
KRRZZAAKKAADOOOMMM
IN THE NAME OF THE TRUE DOOM--
DOOM'S TOO BUSY RANTING TO MAINTAIN THE ILLUSIONS. THEY MUST TAKE A LOT OUT OF HIM.
I CAN SEE MY SCREENS NOW--SEE HOW THE POLICE ACTION I STARTED AGAINST LATVERIA IS DEVELOPING.

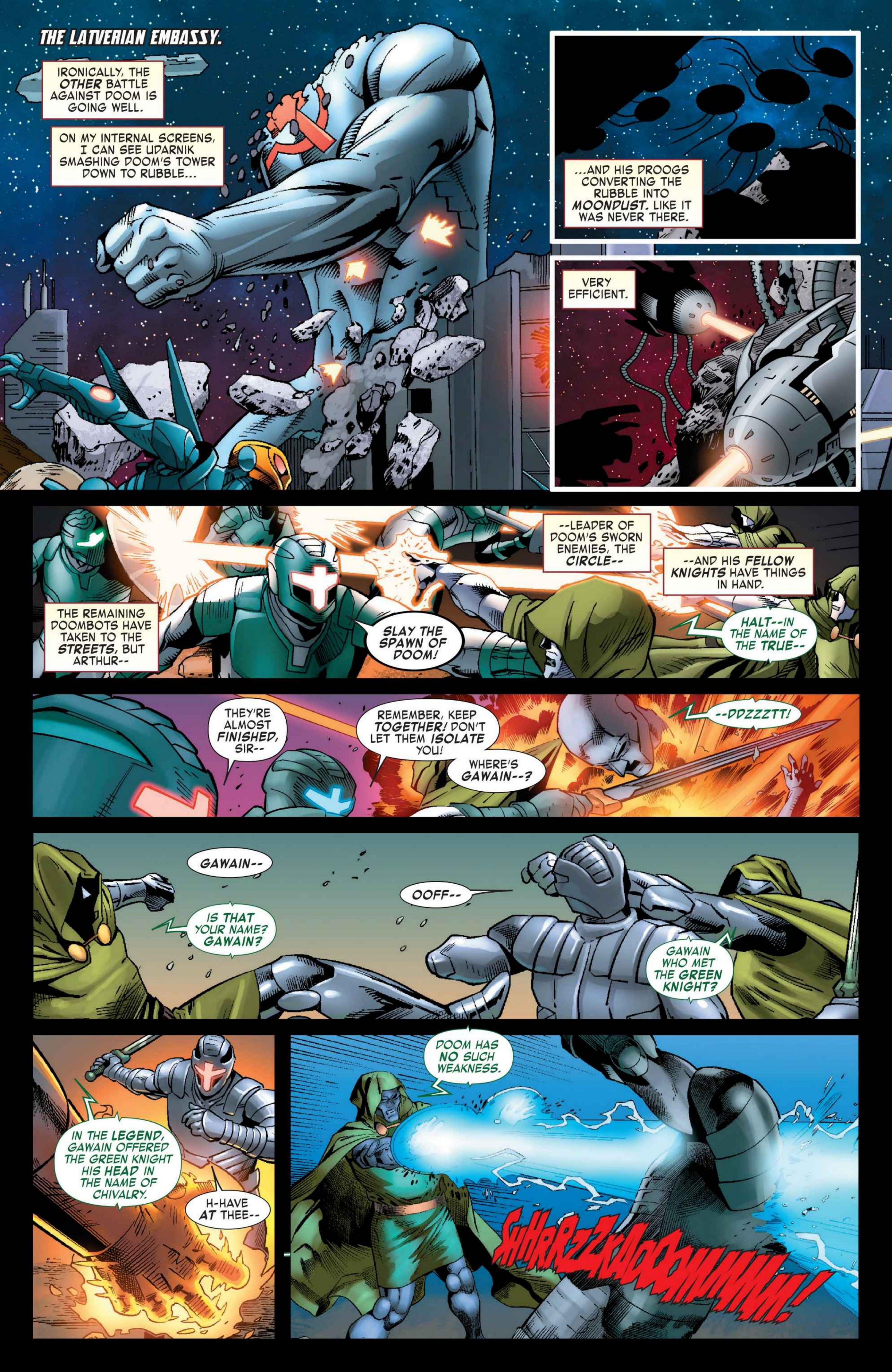

NOT WELL.
UDARNIK'S MY DEPUTY--A RUSSIAN ROBOTICS EXPERIMENT FROM 1972.
HIS GIANT FORM IS MADE UP OF THOUSANDS OF HIS LITTLE BROTHERS--SPIDER-LIKE ROBOTS HE USES TO BUILD THINGS FOR HIM.
HE'S GENERALLY A USEFUL GUY TO HAVE AROUND--EXCEPT HE'S GOT MORE THAN ONE PERSONALITY. THAT WAS THE EXPERIMENTAL PART.
HE'S LIKE THE HULK IN THAT WAY--SWITCHING BETWEEN MILD-MANNERED WORKER-DROID UDARNIK AND HIS SOLDIER-SELF, THE SHOCKWORKER.
UDARNIK BUILDS...
...AND SHOCKWORKER BREAKS.
BROTHERS!
NO--
SWARM!
AND THEY DO.
N-NOO--KKZZZTT!
LIKE LOCUSTS. LIKE A PLAGUE OF RATS.
H-H-HURRTTZZZZKKXX--
IF I WASN'T BUSY, I'D MAKE POPCORN.
OH MY LORD...
I CAN HEAR CORA BIRCH'S VOICE FROM SOMEWHERE CLOSE TO THE ACTION. MY BIOGRAPHER.
THE REMOTE SUIT MUST BE PICKING HER UP.

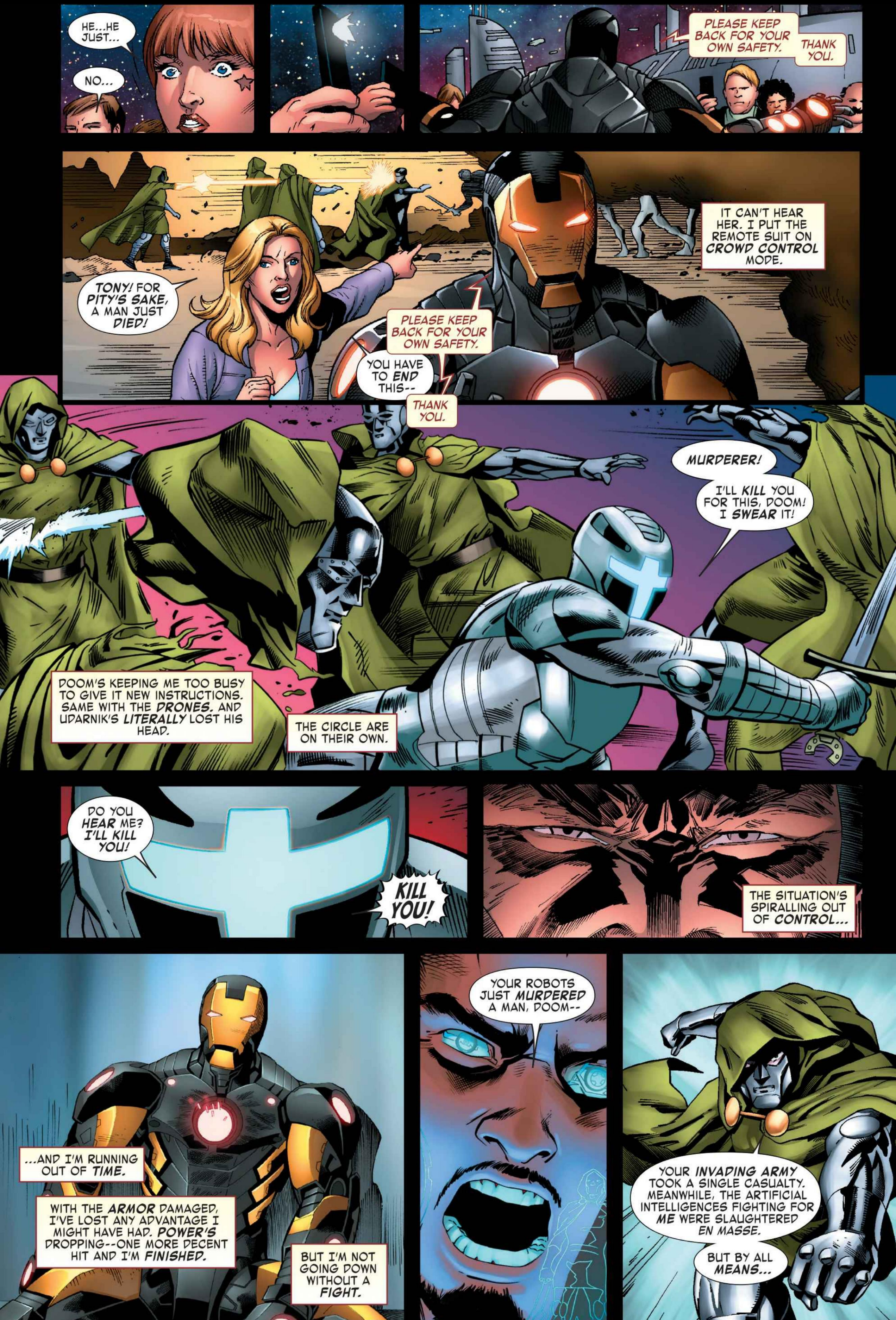

TONY--TONY, SAY SOMETHING, DON'T JUST STAND THERE--
TONY, THIS IS HORRIFIC--
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS RIGHT NOW.
I DON'T HAVE TIME, CORA. JUST... STAND BACK AND WATCH THE SHOW, OKAY?
WATCH THE--ARE YOU CRAZY? WHAT IF ONE OF THESE DEATH RAYS YOU'RE TOSSING ABOUT HITS THE FORCE FIELD, TONY?
THE ONE KEEPING THE AIR IN? IF IT RUPTURES, WE ALL DIE--
THAT ALMOST CERTAINLY WON'T HAPPEN.
ALMOST CERTAINLY?
THERE'S SOME RISK INVOLVED, I ADMIT, BUT IT'S NECESSARY--
REALLY? IT'S NECESSARY TO SLAUGHTER AN EMBASSY FULL OF SENTIENT ARTIFICIAL LIFEFORMS?
WELL, NOW YOU'RE JUST BEING RIDICULOUS--
THE WHOLE WORLD IS TALKING ABOUT A.I. RIGHTS, TONY. THESE AREN'T JUST THINGS YOU GET TO BREAK.
THEY'RE BUILT TO FEEL PAIN, TONY! THEY'RE BUILT WITH HUMAN-LEVEL AWARENESS!
DOOM'S PAIN. DOOM'S DECISIONS. DOOM'S AWARENESS.
SO THE WHOLE WORLD CAN CRY ME A RIVER INTO ITS SOY LATTE.
NOW--MUCH AS I'M LOVING BEING WHINED AT BY A YAMBLR BLOGGER--

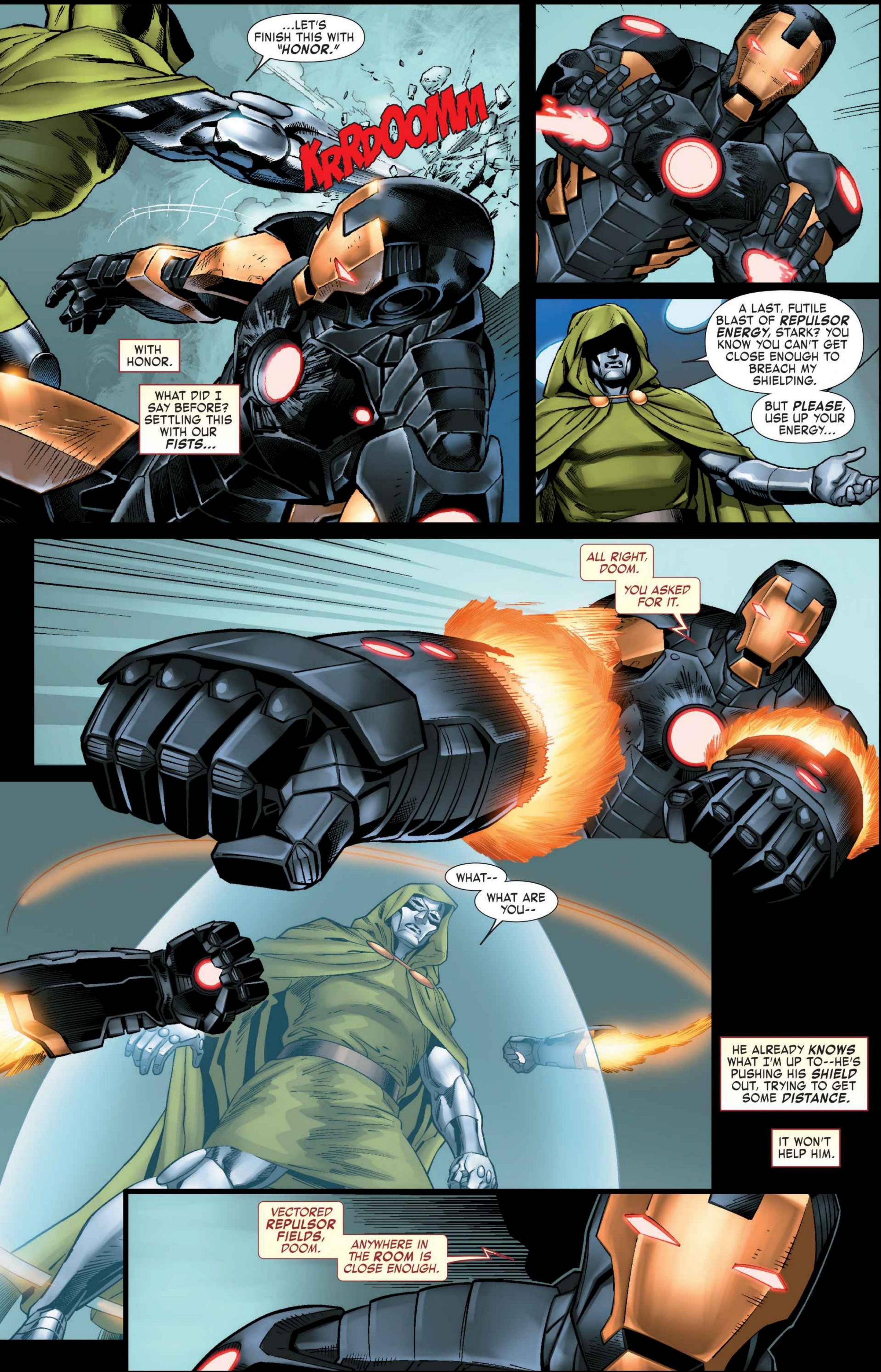

TONY'S LABORATORY.
--I'M A LITTLE BUSY FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE!
SWITCH THE REMOTE TO CROWD CONTROL, TONY. CONCENTRATE.
USE THE BOOT JETS. GET OUT OF HIS RANGE-- SWING AROUND--
--BUILD MOMENTUM--
DON'T GIVE HIM THE CHANCE TO USE HIS--
SO CLOSE, STARK.
--ILLUSIONS.
AND YET...
...SO FAR.
WHUDDOOMM
BLAST.
THIS COULD HAVE BEEN SO EASY, STARK.
I WAS PLANNING TO DESTROY YOUR MIND, INHABIT YOUR BODY AND LIVE AS "TONY" WHILE YOU ROTTED IN MY VACANT SHELL.
KRIISSHH

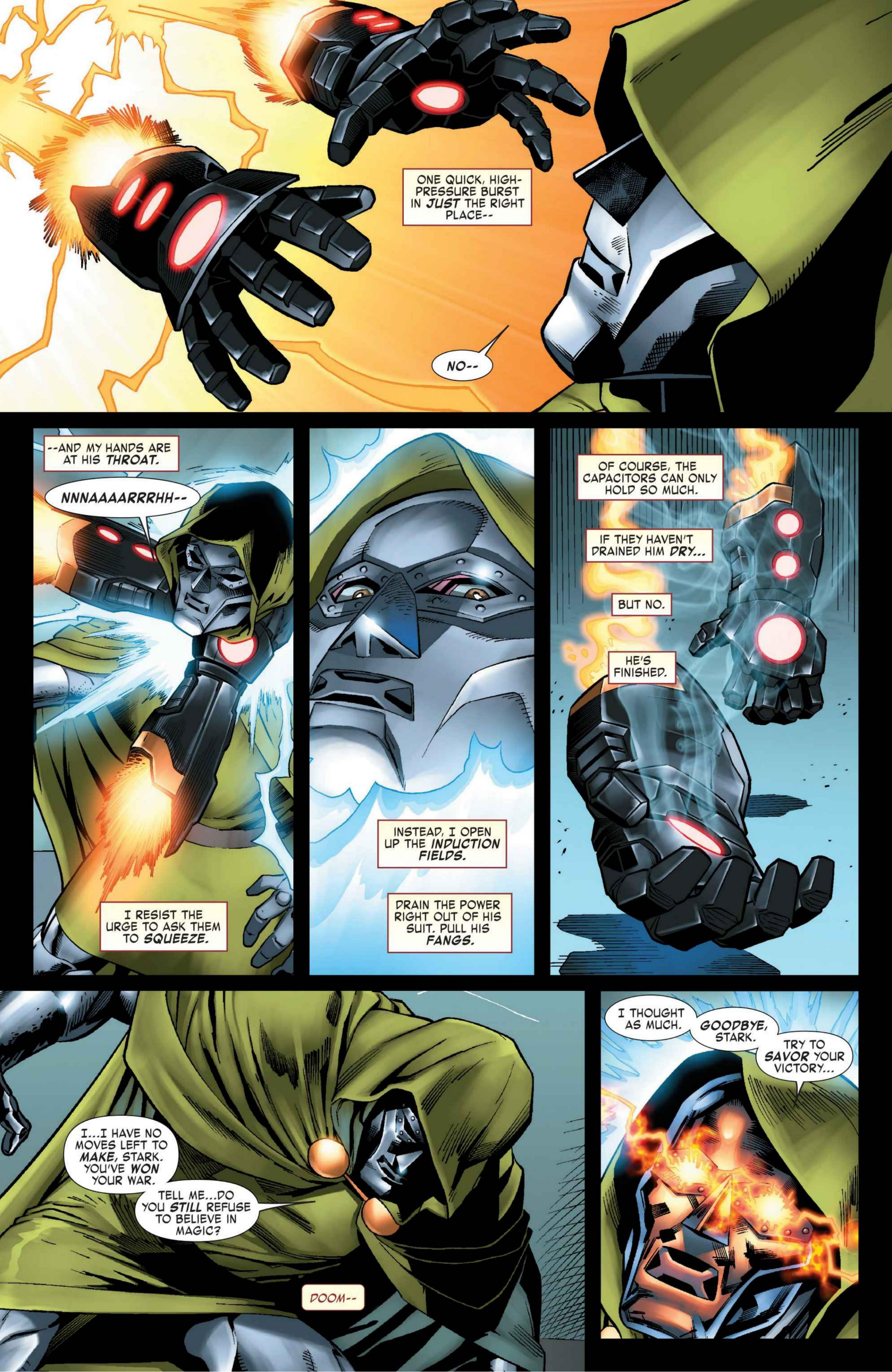

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH LESS *PAINFUL* FOR YOU...
THRRDOOMMM
THE ARMOR CAN'T TAKE MUCH *MORE* OF THIS--
NEED TO SWITCH *TACTICS*--
EXTEND THE *FORCE SHIELD*-- PUSH HIM BACK--
BUY A LITTLE *BREATHING ROOM*--
NNAHH--
WELL...WELL *PLAYED*, STARK. YOU'VE MANAGED TO LOOSEN A *TOOTH.*
I'LL WEAR *YOURS* AS A *NECKLACE*--
I HATE TO THINK WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO THE ***TIMESTREAM*** *JUST BY* ***COMING*** *HERE...*
I HAVE NO DESIRE TO ENDANGER MY OWN PAST, STARK. I TRAVELLED *SIDEWAYS* IN TIME AS WELL AS BACK.
WHICH UNIVERSE IS THIS, EXACTLY? 615? 616? DO YOU EVEN *KNOW?*
NO MATTER. I'LL RULE THEM *ALL* SOON ENOUGH.
YOU'RE INSANE.
I WOULD BE IF I COULDN'T DO IT.
AS IT IS, I'M MERELY *AMBITIOUS.*
PHLOGISTONE, STARK. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT CAN *DO* YET. ALLOW ME TO *ENLIGHTEN* YOU.
CHANNEL THE ENERGIES OF PHLOGISTONE INTO *IRON ORE* IN THE PROPER MANNER...
...AND THE IRON *BECOMES* PHLOGISTONE.
ISN'T THAT *FASCINATING?*
WHAT DID HE--? NO. IT'S JUST DOOM RANTING. IGNORE IT.
AS LONG AS HE'S NOT USING HIS *ILLUSIONS*--HOWEVER THAT WORKS--
--I CAN USE A LITTLE OF WHAT *CAPTAIN AMERICA* TAUGHT ME-- GET HIM *OFF-BALANCE* FOR A MOMENT--
DID HE REALLY SAY THE IRON *BECOMES* PHLOGISTONE? THAT WOULD MEAN--
DOOM, THAT WOULD MEAN ***CREATING ENERGY.*** *THAT DOESN'T MAKE* ***SENSE.***

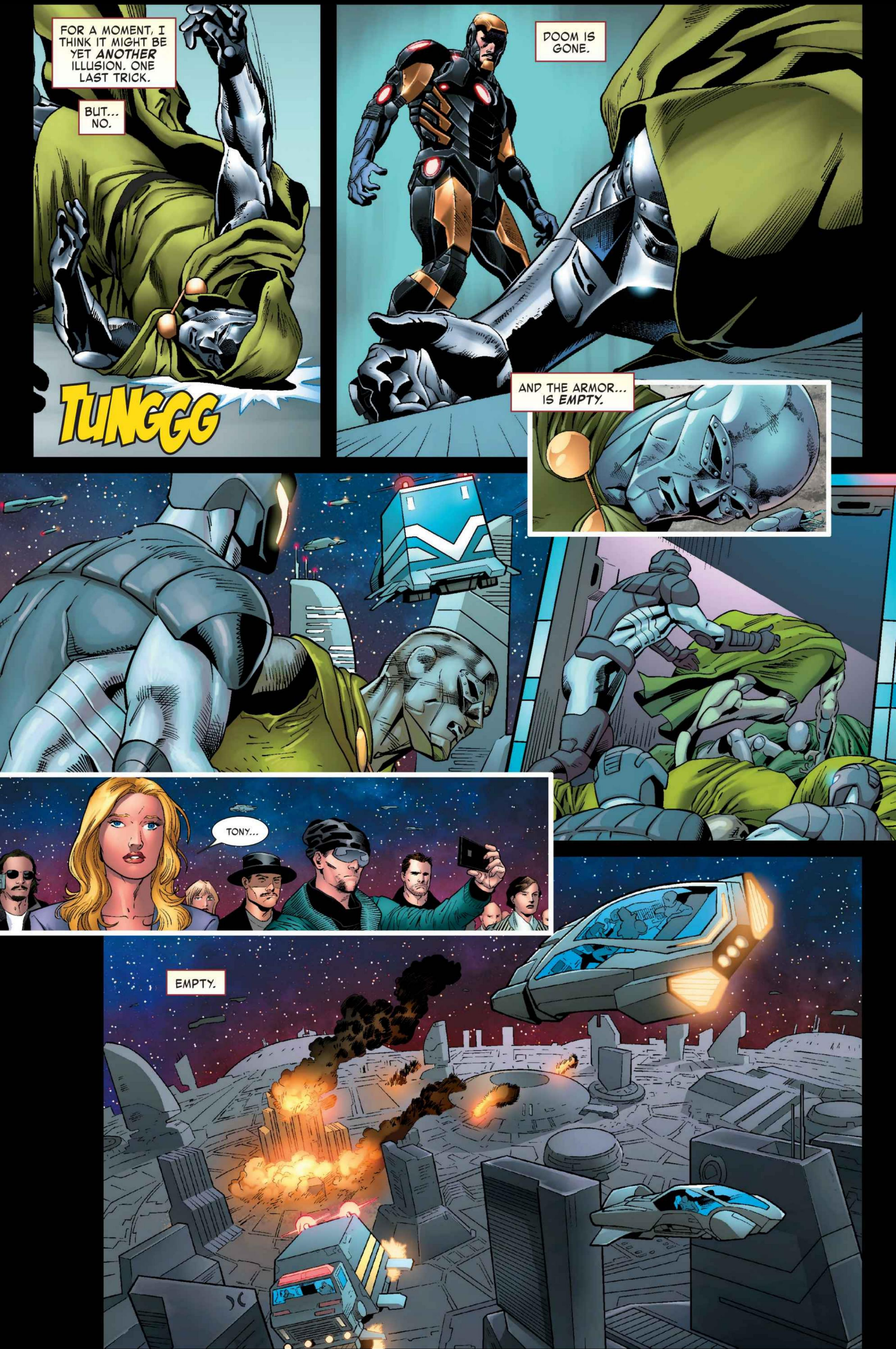

IT'S AGAINST ALL THE LAWS OF PHYSICS--
NNNGH--
NO, STARK. DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN HIS CRAZY. IGNORE IT.
HIS BACK'S JUST AS WELL-SHIELDED AS HIS FRONT WAS--
TH-THIS IS NOT PHYSICS, STARK. THIS IS ALCHEMY.
THERE IS A DEVICE-- IN MY ARMOR, NOW-- WHICH ABSORBS COSMIC POWER. I USED IT AGAINST THE SILVER SURFER, LONG AGO.
WITH IT, I WILL ABSORB THE COSMIC POWER OF PHLOGISTONE-- AND THEN MAKE MORE PHLOGISTONE.
ABSORB POWER FROM THAT. AND MAKE MORE.
AND MORE. AND MORE!
UNTIL I AM POWER! POWER INCARNATE!
UNTIL DOOM TAKES HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE--
--AS YOUR GOD!
FHDOOMMM
PALM STRIKE--
--ENHANCED WITH A BLAST FROM HIS WEAPONRY. HE'S MANAGED TO BREACH MY SHIELDING, AND-- YES--
--HE'S CRACKED THE MAIN REPULSOR NODE.
WHICH MEANS I'M IN TROUBLE...
PRAY TO ME, STARK.
PRAY I'LL END IT QUICKLY...

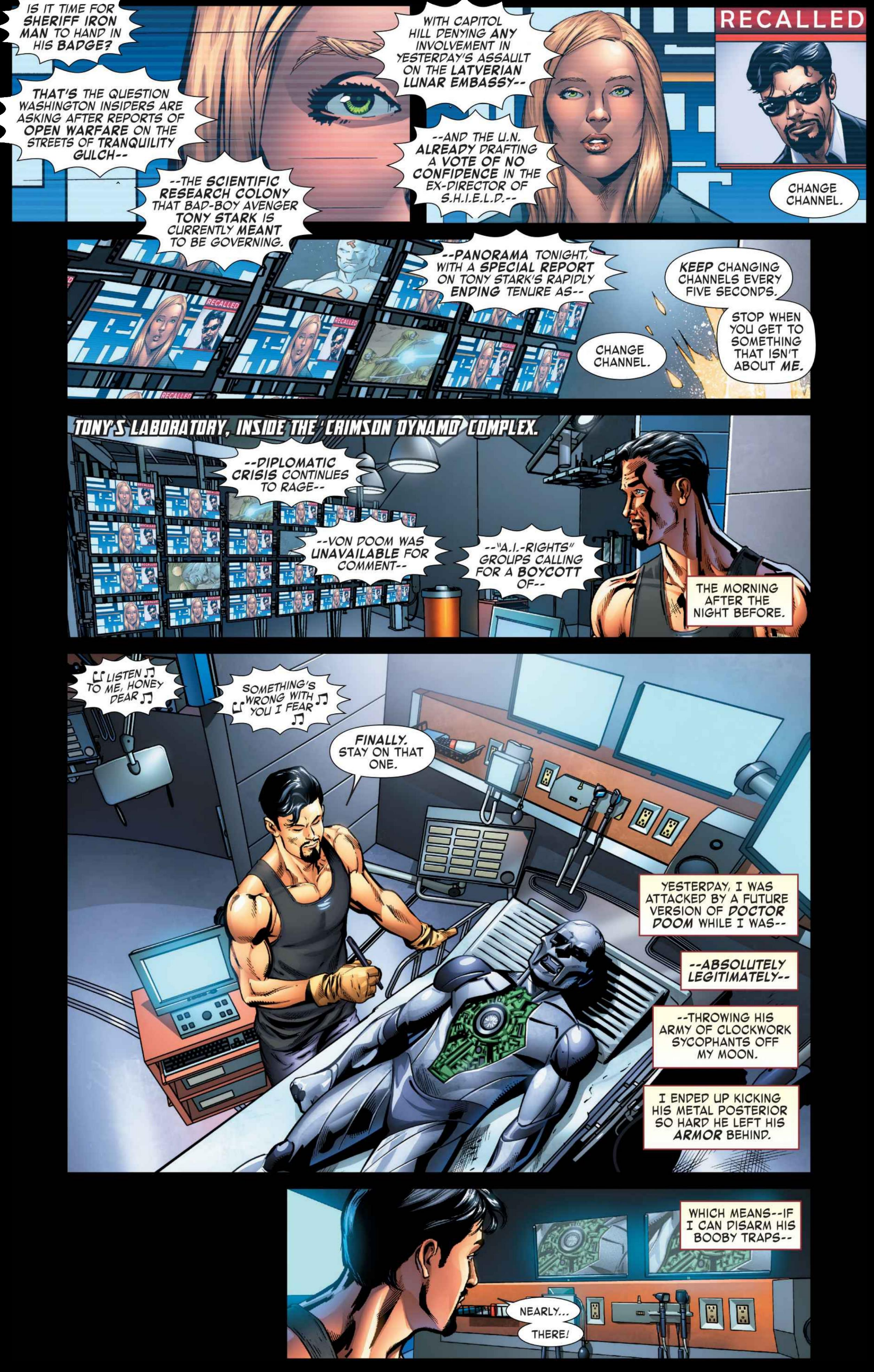

THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY.
IRONICALLY, THE OTHER BATTLE AGAINST DOOM IS GOING WELL.
ON MY INTERNAL SCREENS, I CAN SEE UDARNIK SMASHING DOOM'S TOWER DOWN TO RUBBLE...
...AND HIS DROOGS CONVERTING THE RUBBLE INTO MOONDUST. LIKE IT WAS NEVER THERE.
VERY EFFICIENT.
THE REMAINING DOOMBOTS HAVE TAKEN TO THE STREETS, BUT ARTHUR--
SLAY THE SPAWN OF DOOM!
--LEADER OF DOOM'S SWORN ENEMIES, THE CIRCLE--
--AND HIS FELLOW KNIGHTS HAVE THINGS IN HAND.
HALT--IN THE NAME OF THE TRUE--
THEY'RE ALMOST FINISHED, SIR--
REMEMBER, KEEP TOGETHER! DON'T LET THEM ISOLATE YOU!
WHERE'S GAWAIN--?
--DDZZZTT!
GAWAIN--
IS THAT YOUR NAME? GAWAIN?
OOFF--
GAWAIN WHO MET THE GREEN KNIGHT?
IN THE LEGEND, GAWAIN OFFERED THE GREEN KNIGHT HIS HEAD IN THE NAME OF CHIVALRY.
H-HAVE AT THEE--
DOOM HAS NO SUCH WEAKNESS.
SHHRZZKADOOMMMM!

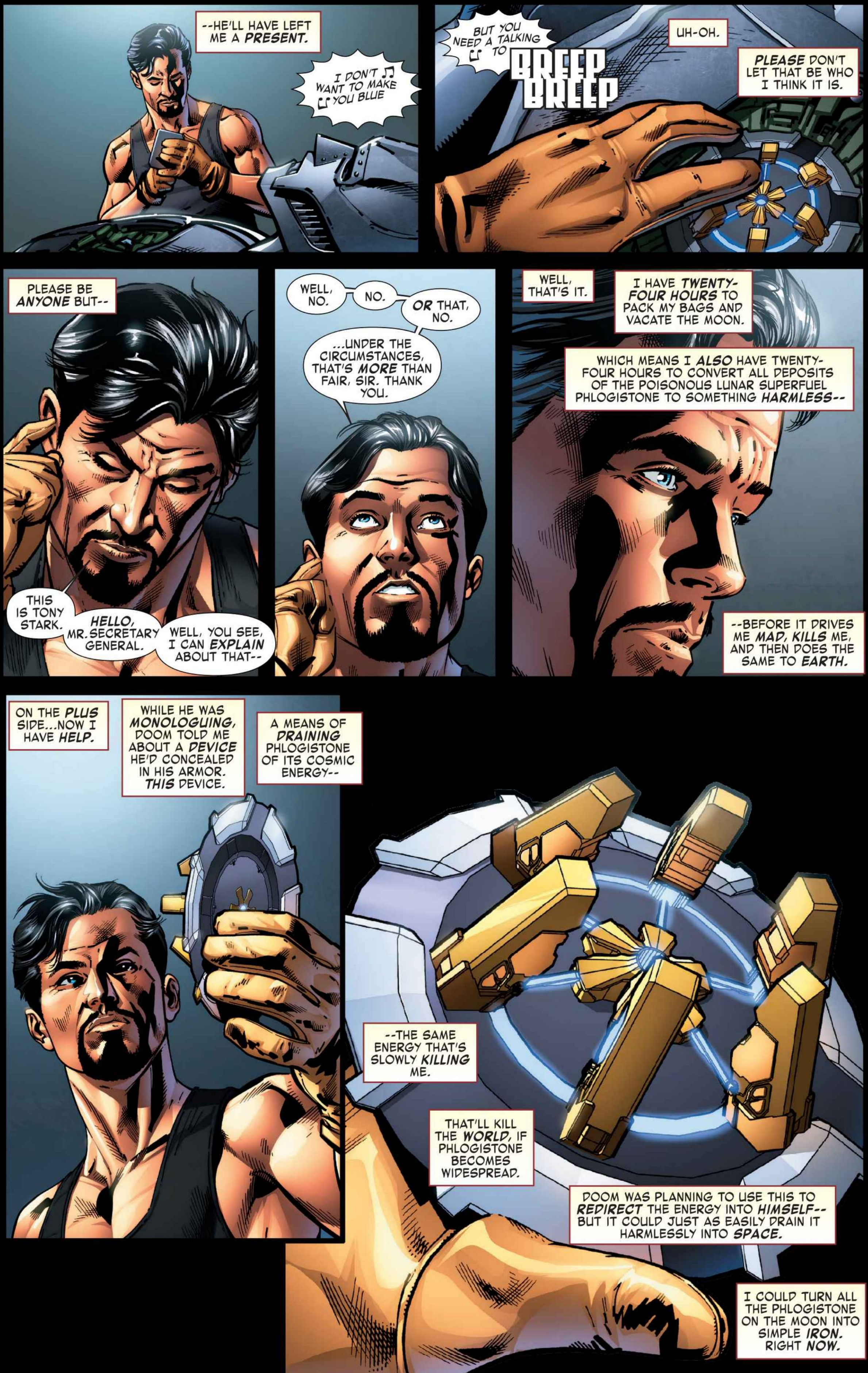

HE...HE JUST...
NO...
PLEASE KEEP BACK FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.
THANK YOU.
TONY! FOR PITY'S SAKE, A MAN JUST DIED!
PLEASE KEEP BACK FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.
YOU HAVE TO END THIS--
THANK YOU.
IT CAN'T HEAR HER. I PUT THE REMOTE SUIT ON CROWD CONTROL MODE.
MURDERER!
I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS, DOOM! I SWEAR IT!
DOOM'S KEEPING ME TOO BUSY TO GIVE IT NEW INSTRUCTIONS. SAME WITH THE DRONES. AND UDARNIK'S LITERALLY LOST HIS HEAD.
THE CIRCLE ARE ON THEIR OWN.
DO YOU HEAR ME? I'LL KILL YOU!
KILL YOU!
THE SITUATION'S SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL...
...AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
WITH THE ARMOR DAMAGED, I'VE LOST ANY ADVANTAGE I MIGHT HAVE HAD. POWER'S DROPPING--ONE MORE DECENT HIT AND I'M FINISHED.
BUT I'M NOT GOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
YOUR ROBOTS JUST MURDERED A MAN, DOOM--
YOUR INVADING ARMY TOOK A SINGLE CASUALTY. MEANWHILE, THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES FIGHTING FOR ME WERE SLAUGHTERED EN MASSE.
BUT BY ALL MEANS...

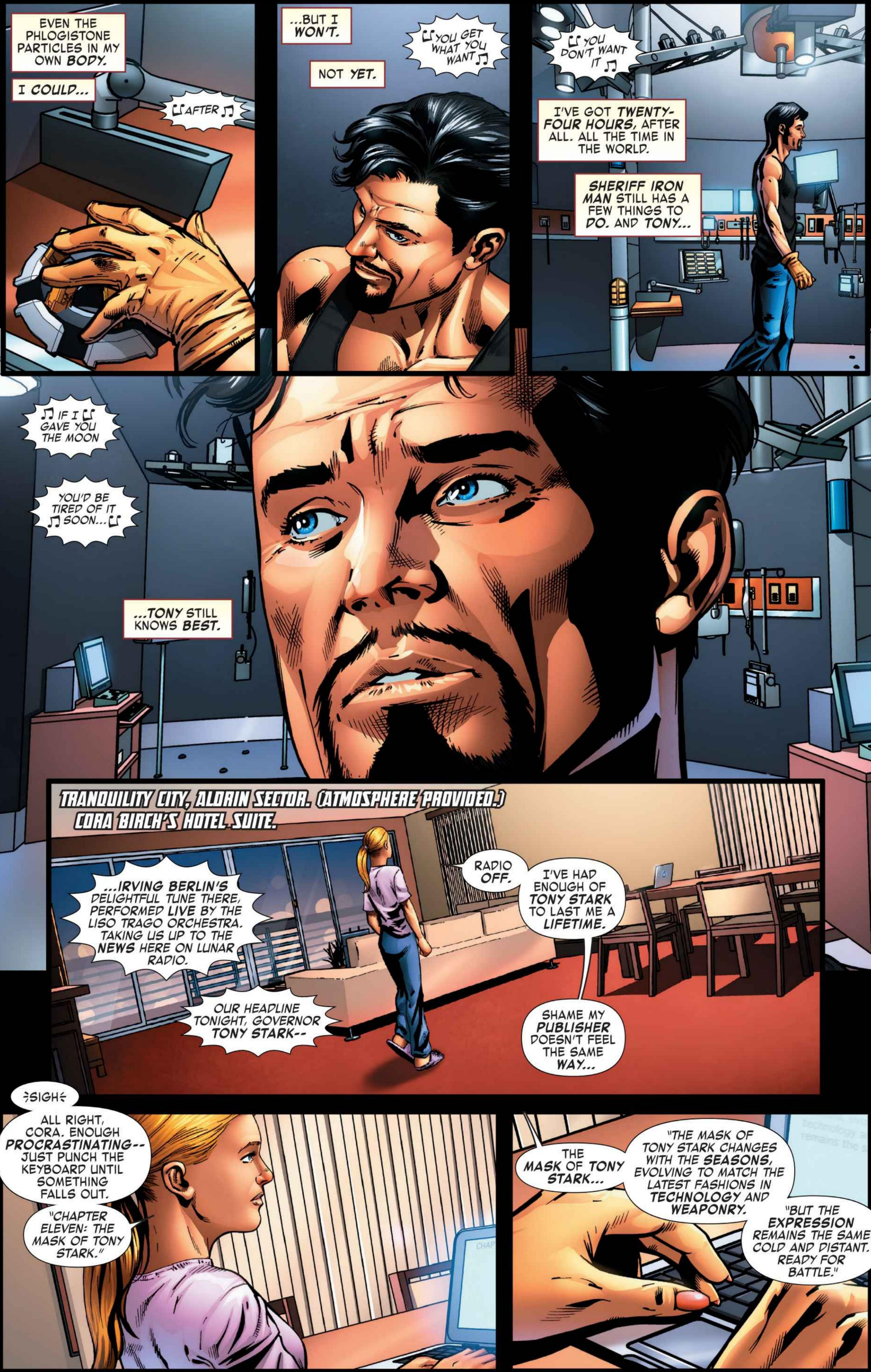

...LET'S FINISH THIS WITH "HONOR."
KRRDOOMM
WITH HONOR.
WHAT DID I SAY BEFORE? SETTLING THIS WITH OUR FISTS...
A LAST, FUTILE BLAST OF REPULSOR ENERGY, STARK? YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO BREACH MY SHIELDING.
BUT PLEASE, USE UP YOUR ENERGY...
ALL RIGHT, DOOM.
YOU ASKED FOR IT.
WHAT--
WHAT ARE YOU--
HE ALREADY KNOWS WHAT I'M UP TO--HE'S PUSHING HIS SHIELD OUT, TRYING TO GET SOME DISTANCE.
IT WON'T HELP HIM.
VECTORED REPULSOR FIELDS, DOOM.
ANYWHERE IN THE ROOM IS CLOSE ENOUGH.

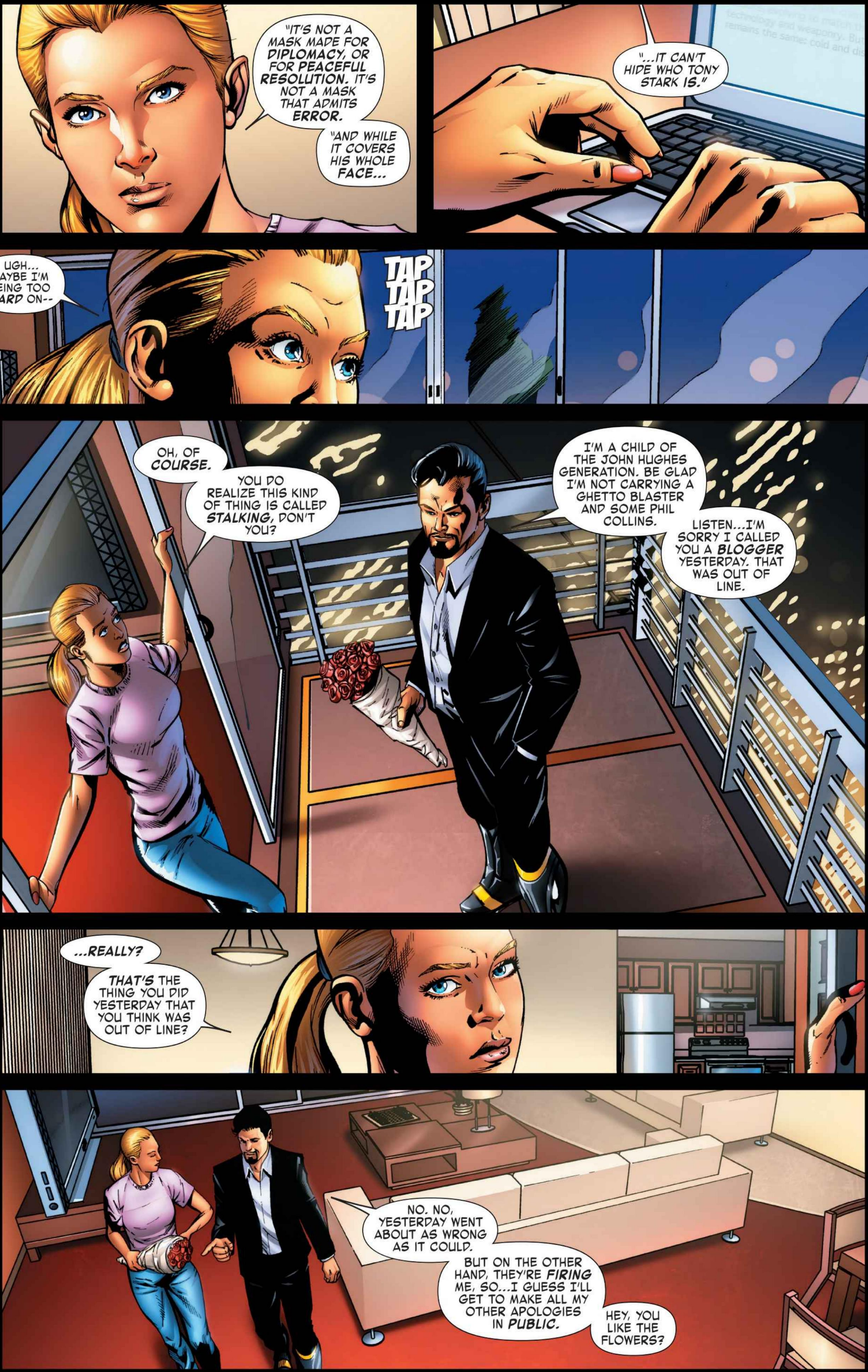

ONE QUICK, HIGH-PRESSURE BURST IN *JUST* THE RIGHT PLACE--
NO--
--AND MY HANDS ARE AT HIS *THROAT.*
NNNAAAARRRHH--
I RESIST THE URGE TO ASK THEM TO *SQUEEZE.*
INSTEAD, I OPEN UP THE *INDUCTION FIELDS.*
DRAIN THE POWER RIGHT OUT OF HIS SUIT. PULL HIS *FANGS.*
OF COURSE, THE CAPACITORS CAN ONLY HOLD SO MUCH.
IF THEY HAVEN'T DRAINED HIM *DRY...*
BUT NO.
HE'S FINISHED.
I...I HAVE NO MOVES LEFT TO *MAKE,* STARK. YOU'VE *WON* YOUR WAR.
TELL ME...DO YOU *STILL* REFUSE TO BELIEVE IN MAGIC?
DOOM--
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.
GOODBYE, STARK.
TRY TO *SAVOR* YOUR VICTORY...

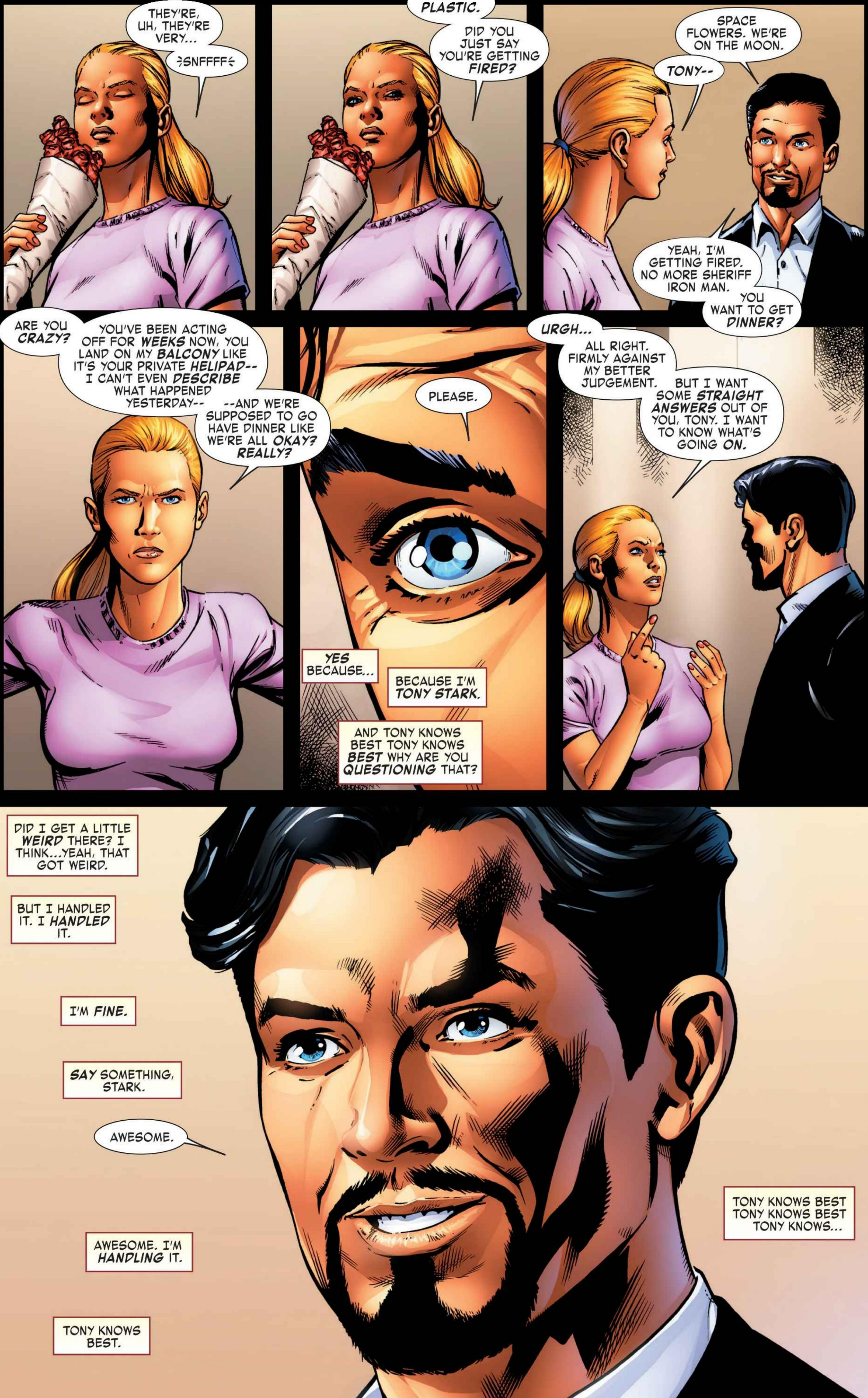

FOR A MOMENT, I THINK IT MIGHT BE YET *ANOTHER* ILLUSION. ONE LAST TRICK.
BUT... NO.
TUNGGG
DOOM IS GONE.
AND THE ARMOR... IS *EMPTY.*
TONY...
EMPTY.

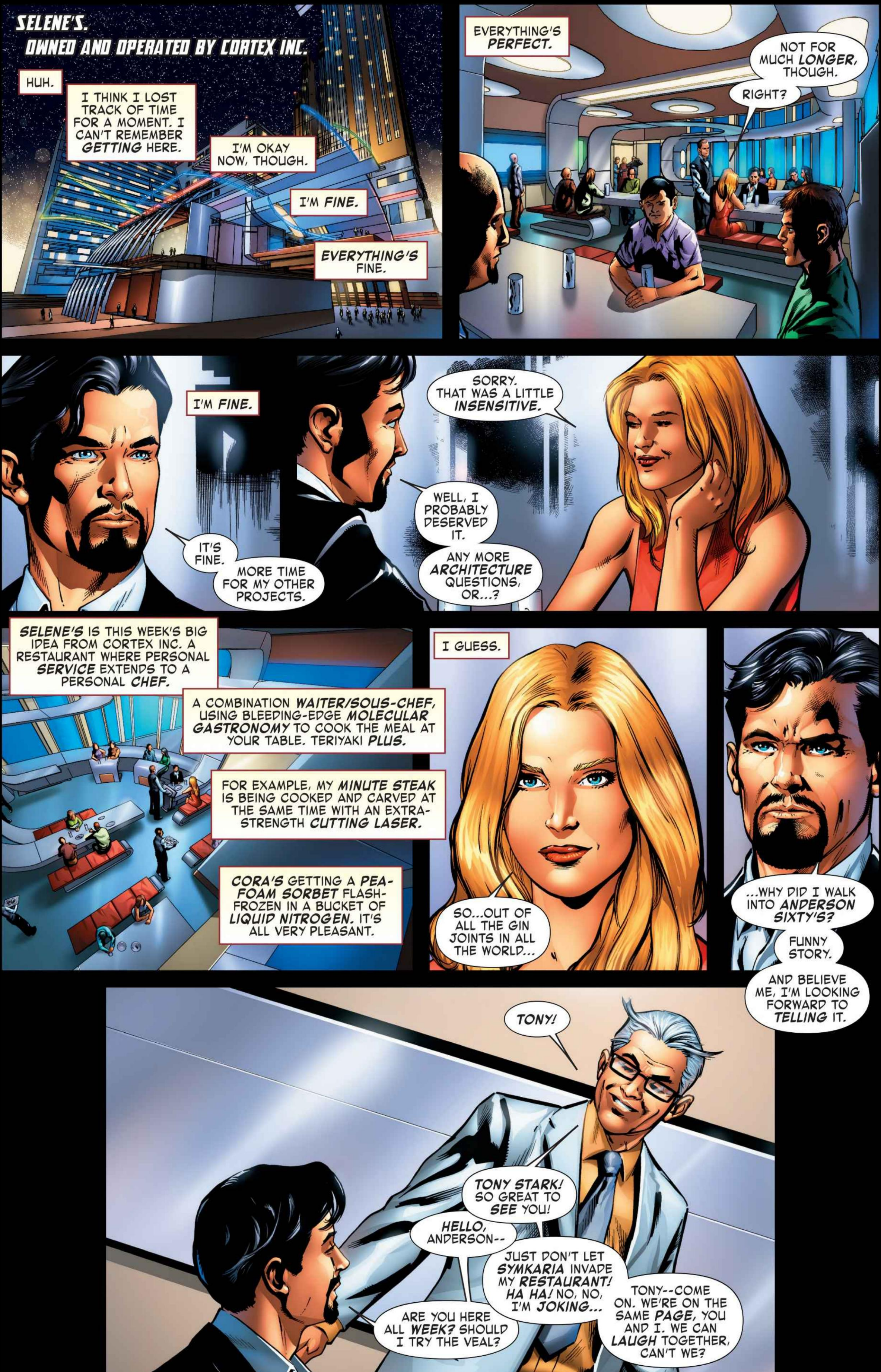

IS IT TIME FOR SHERIFF IRON MAN TO HAND IN HIS BADGE?
THAT'S THE QUESTION WASHINGTON INSIDERS ARE ASKING AFTER REPORTS OF OPEN WARFARE ON THE STREETS OF TRANQUILITY GULCH--
--THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COLONY THAT BAD-BOY AVENGER TONY STARK IS CURRENTLY MEANT TO BE GOVERNING.
WITH CAPITOL HILL DENYING ANY INVOLVEMENT IN YESTERDAY'S ASSAULT ON THE LATVERIAN LUNAR EMBASSY--
--AND THE U.N. ALREADY DRAFTING A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE EX-DIRECTOR OF S.H.I.E.L.D.--
RECALLED
CHANGE CHANNEL.
--PANORAMA TONIGHT, WITH A SPECIAL REPORT ON TONY STARK'S RAPIDLY ENDING TENURE AS--
CHANGE CHANNEL.
KEEP CHANGING CHANNELS EVERY FIVE SECONDS.
STOP WHEN YOU GET TO SOMETHING THAT ISN'T ABOUT ME.
TONY'S LABORATORY, INSIDE THE 'CRIMSON DYNAMO' COMPLEX.
--DIPLOMATIC CRISIS CONTINUES TO RAGE--
--VON DOOM WAS UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT--
--"A.I.-RIGHTS" GROUPS CALLING FOR A BOYCOTT OF--
THE MORNING AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE.
♫ LISTEN ♫ TO ME, HONEY DEAR ♫
SOMETHING'S ♫ WRONG WITH YOU I FEAR ♫ ♫
FINALLY. STAY ON THAT ONE.
YESTERDAY, I WAS ATTACKED BY A FUTURE VERSION OF DOCTOR DOOM WHILE I WAS--
--ABSOLUTELY LEGITIMATELY--
--THROWING HIS ARMY OF CLOCKWORK SYCOPHANTS OFF MY MOON.
I ENDED UP KICKING HIS METAL POSTERIOR SO HARD HE LEFT HIS ARMOR BEHIND.
WHICH MEANS--IF I CAN DISARM HIS BOOBY TRAPS--
NEARLY...
THERE!

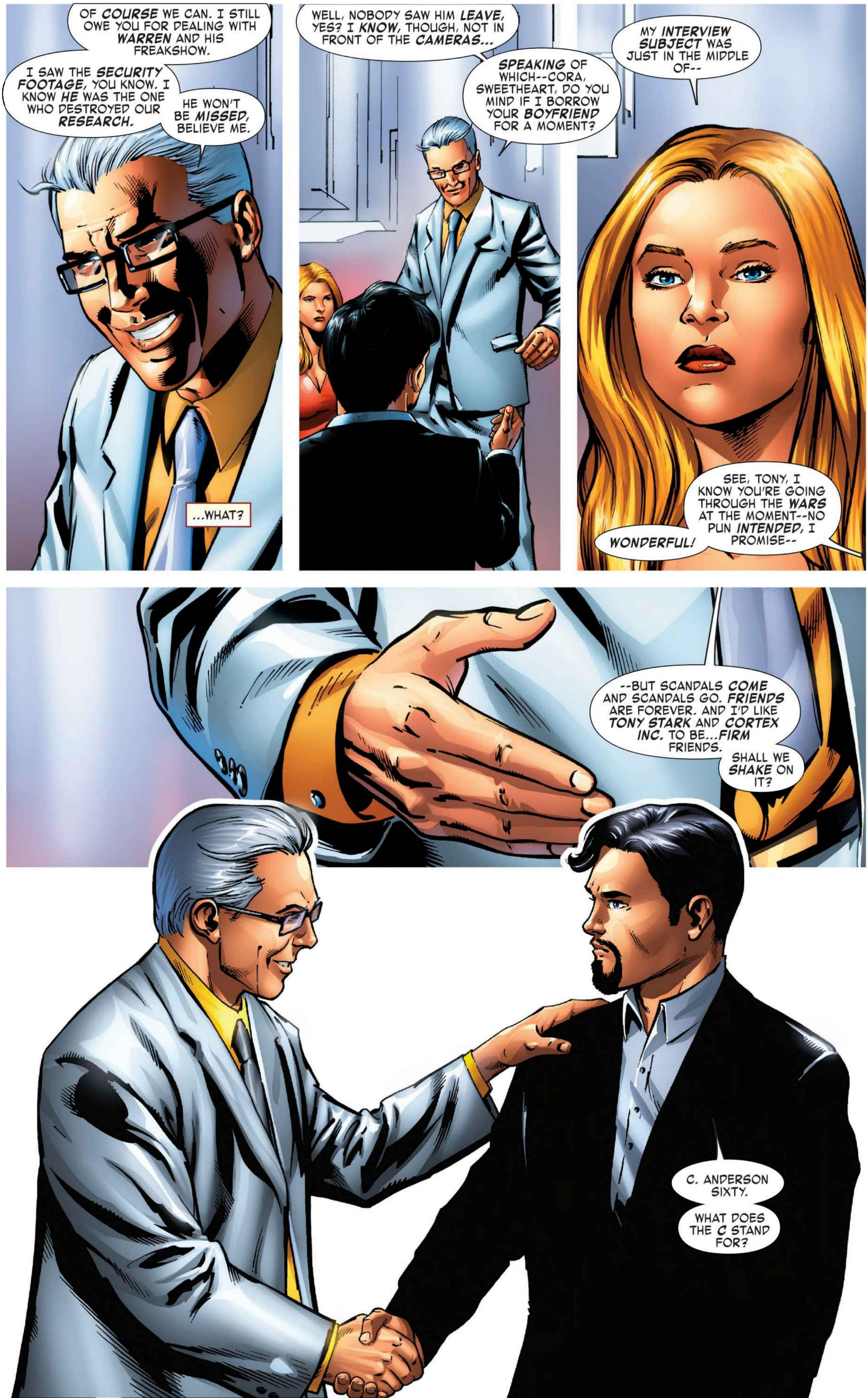

--HE'LL HAVE LEFT ME A PRESENT.
I DON'T ♫ WANT TO MAKE ♫ YOU BLUE
BUT YOU NEED A TALKING ♫ TO
BREEP BREEP
UH-OH.
PLEASE DON'T LET THAT BE WHO I THINK IT IS.
PLEASE BE ANYONE BUT--
THIS IS TONY STARK.
HELLO, MR. SECRETARY GENERAL.
WELL, YOU SEE, I CAN EXPLAIN ABOUT THAT--
WELL, NO.
NO.
OR THAT, NO.
...UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT'S MORE THAN FAIR, SIR. THANK YOU.
WELL, THAT'S IT.
I HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO PACK MY BAGS AND VACATE THE MOON.
WHICH MEANS I ALSO HAVE TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO CONVERT ALL DEPOSITS OF THE POISONOUS LUNAR SUPERFUEL PHLOGISTONE TO SOMETHING HARMLESS--
--BEFORE IT DRIVES ME MAD, KILLS ME, AND THEN DOES THE SAME TO EARTH.
ON THE PLUS SIDE...NOW I HAVE HELP.
WHILE HE WAS MONOLOGUING, DOOM TOLD ME ABOUT A DEVICE HE'D CONCEALED IN HIS ARMOR. THIS DEVICE.
A MEANS OF DRAINING PHLOGISTONE OF ITS COSMIC ENERGY--
--THE SAME ENERGY THAT'S SLOWLY KILLING ME.
THAT'LL KILL THE WORLD, IF PHLOGISTONE BECOMES WIDESPREAD.
DOOM WAS PLANNING TO USE THIS TO REDIRECT THE ENERGY INTO HIMSELF-- BUT IT COULD JUST AS EASILY DRAIN IT HARMLESSLY INTO SPACE.
I COULD TURN ALL THE PHLOGISTONE ON THE MOON INTO SIMPLE IRON. RIGHT NOW.

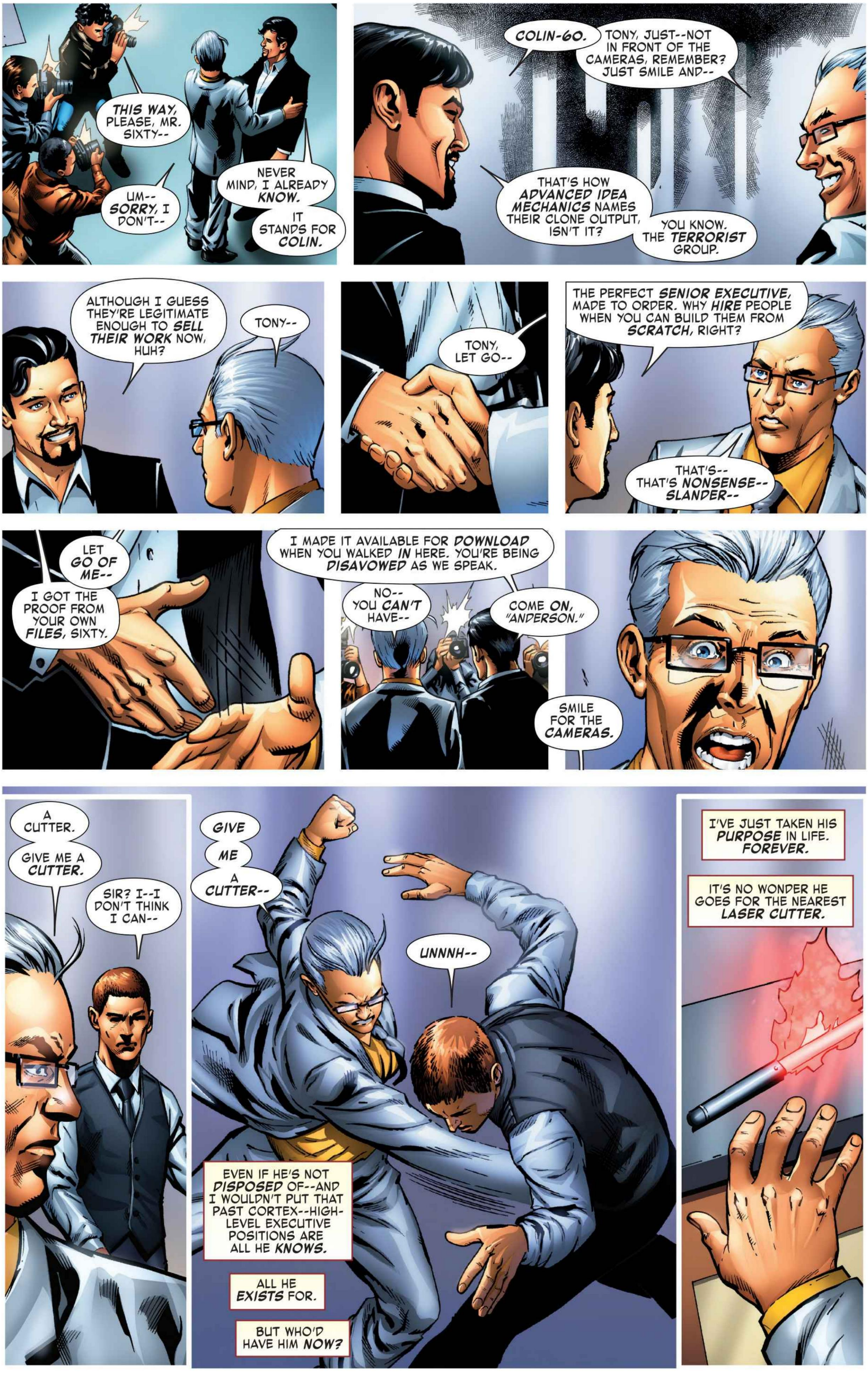

EVEN THE PHLOGISTONE PARTICLES IN MY OWN BODY.
I COULD...
♫AFTER♫
...BUT I WON'T.
NOT YET.
♫YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT♫
♫YOU DON'T WANT IT♫
I'VE GOT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, AFTER ALL. ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.
SHERIFF IRON MAN STILL HAS A FEW THINGS TO DO. AND TONY...
♫IF I♫ GAVE YOU THE MOON
YOU'D BE TIRED OF IT ♫SOON...♫
...TONY STILL KNOWS BEST.
TRANQUILITY CITY, ALDRIN SECTOR. (ATMOSPHERE PROVIDED.) CORA BIRCH'S HOTEL SUITE.
...IRVING BERLIN'S DELIGHTFUL TUNE THERE, PERFORMED LIVE BY THE LISO TRAGO ORCHESTRA. TAKING US UP TO THE NEWS HERE ON LUNAR RADIO.
OUR HEADLINE TONIGHT, GOVERNOR TONY STARK--
RADIO OFF.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF TONY STARK TO LAST ME A LIFETIME.
SHAME MY PUBLISHER DOESN'T FEEL THE SAME WAY...
SIGH
ALL RIGHT, CORA. ENOUGH PROCRASTINATING--JUST PUNCH THE KEYBOARD UNTIL SOMETHING FALLS OUT.
"CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE MASK OF TONY STARK."
THE MASK OF TONY STARK...
"THE MASK OF TONY STARK CHANGES WITH THE SEASONS, EVOLVING TO MATCH THE LATEST FASHIONS IN TECHNOLOGY AND WEAPONRY.
"BUT THE EXPRESSION REMAINS THE SAME: COLD AND DISTANT. READY FOR BATTLE."

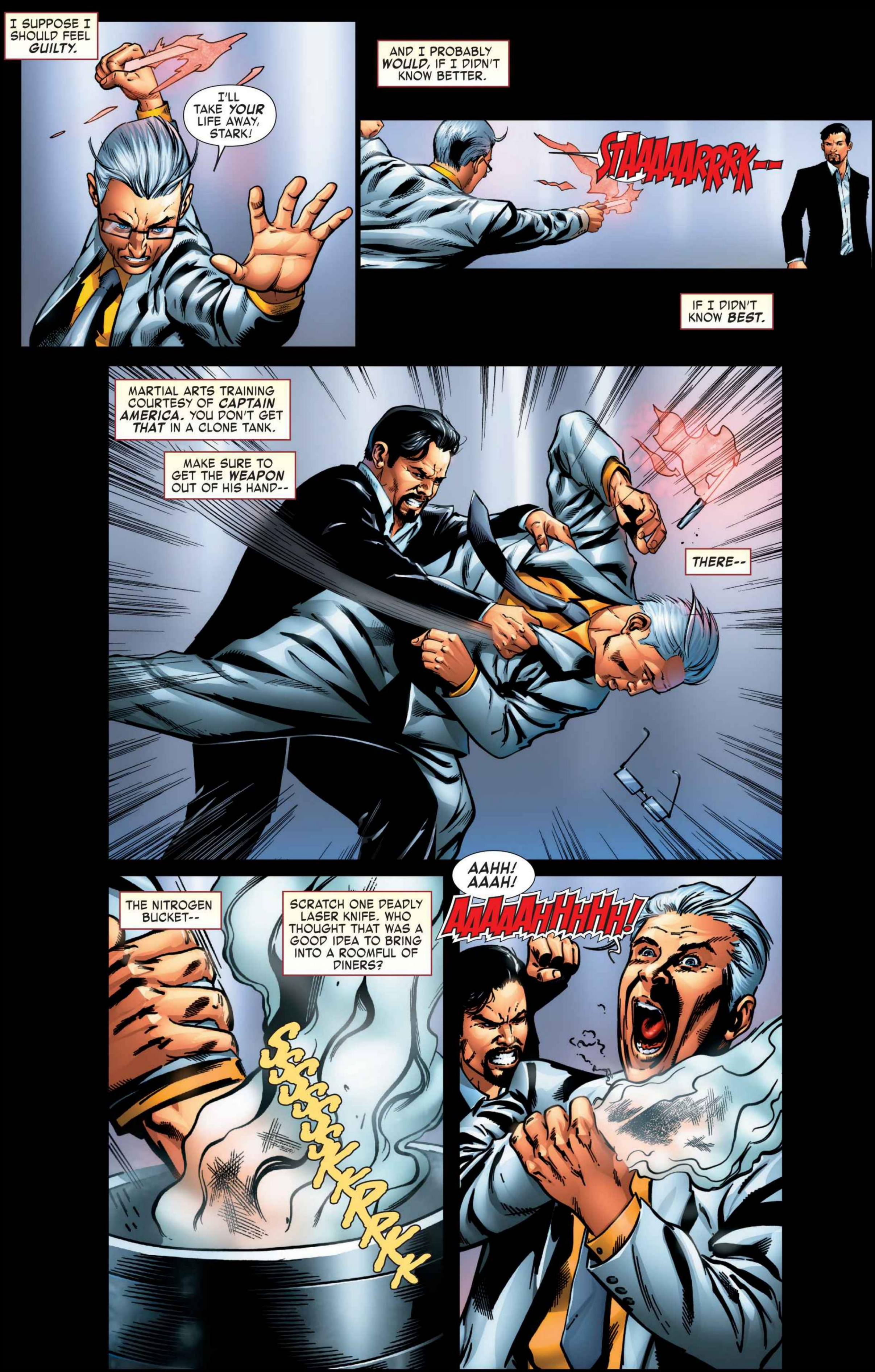

"IT'S NOT A MASK MADE FOR **DIPLOMACY**, OR FOR **PEACEFUL RESOLUTION**. IT'S NOT A MASK THAT ADMITS **ERROR**.
"AND WHILE IT COVERS HIS WHOLE **FACE**...
technology and weaponry. Bu
remains the same: cold and dis
"...IT CAN'T HIDE WHO TONY STARK **IS**."
UGH... MAYBE I'M BEING TOO **HARD** ON--
TAP TAP TAP
OH, OF **COURSE**.
YOU DO REALIZE THIS KIND OF THING IS CALLED **STALKING**, DON'T YOU?
I'M A CHILD OF THE JOHN HUGHES GENERATION. BE GLAD I'M NOT CARRYING A GHETTO BLASTER AND SOME PHIL COLLINS.
LISTEN...I'M SORRY I CALLED YOU A **BLOGGER** YESTERDAY. THAT WAS OUT OF LINE.
...REALLY?
THAT'S THE THING YOU DID YESTERDAY THAT YOU THINK WAS OUT OF LINE?
NO. NO, YESTERDAY WENT ABOUT AS WRONG AS IT COULD.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY'RE **FIRING** ME, SO...I GUESS I'LL GET TO MAKE ALL MY OTHER APOLOGIES IN **PUBLIC**.
HEY, YOU LIKE THE FLOWERS?

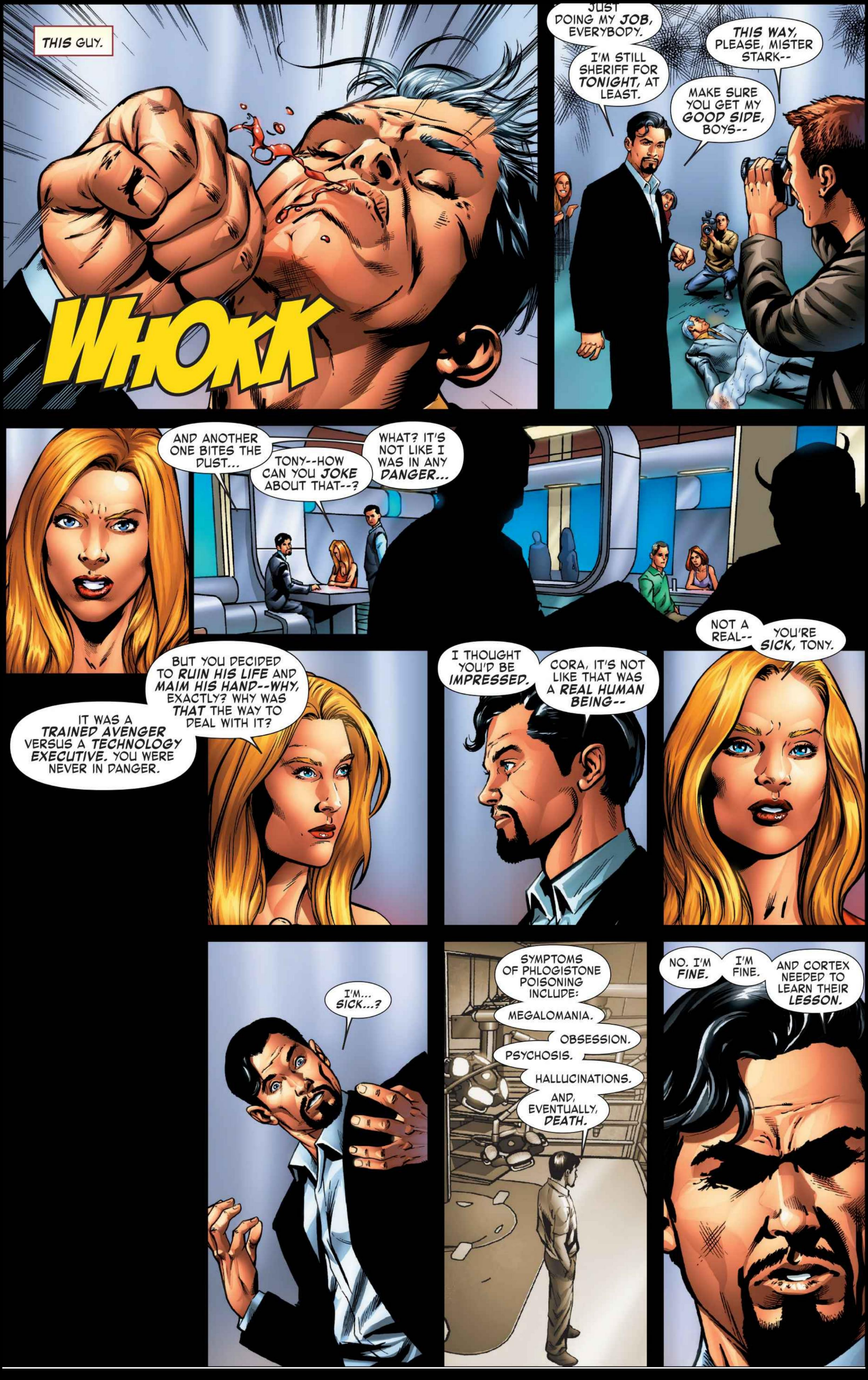

THEY'RE, UH, THEY'RE VERY...
≷SNFFFF≶
...VERY PLASTIC.
DID YOU JUST SAY YOU'RE GETTING FIRED?
SPACE FLOWERS. WE'RE ON THE MOON.
TONY--
YEAH, I'M GETTING FIRED. NO MORE SHERIFF IRON MAN.
YOU WANT TO GET DINNER?
ARE YOU CRAZY?
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING OFF FOR WEEKS NOW, YOU LAND ON MY BALCONY LIKE IT'S YOUR PRIVATE HELIPAD-- I CAN'T EVEN DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY--
--AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GO HAVE DINNER LIKE WE'RE ALL OKAY? REALLY?
PLEASE.
YES BECAUSE...
BECAUSE I'M TONY STARK.
AND TONY KNOWS BEST TONY KNOWS BEST WHY ARE YOU QUESTIONING THAT?
URGH...
ALL RIGHT. FIRMLY AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT.
BUT I WANT SOME STRAIGHT ANSWERS OUT OF YOU, TONY. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON.
DID I GET A LITTLE WEIRD THERE? I THINK...YEAH, THAT GOT WEIRD.
BUT I HANDLED IT. I HANDLED IT.
I'M FINE.
SAY SOMETHING, STARK.
AWESOME.
AWESOME. I'M HANDLING IT.
TONY KNOWS BEST.
TONY KNOWS BEST TONY KNOWS BEST TONY KNOWS...

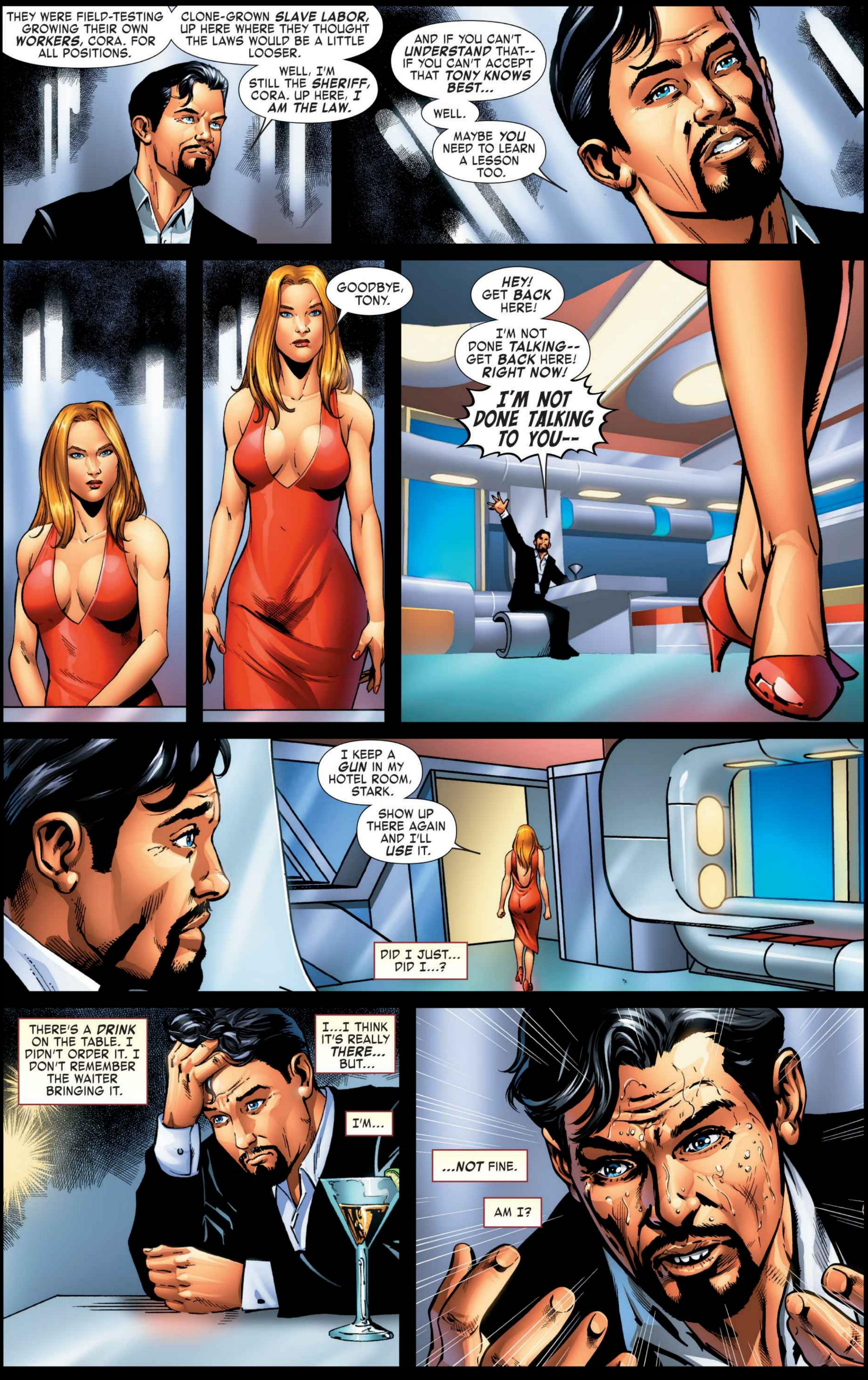

SELENE'S.
OWNED AND OPERATED BY CORTEX INC.
HUH.
I THINK I LOST TRACK OF TIME FOR A MOMENT. I CAN'T REMEMBER *GETTING* HERE.
I'M OKAY NOW, THOUGH.
I'M *FINE.*
EVERYTHING'S FINE.
EVERYTHING'S *PERFECT.*
NOT FOR MUCH *LONGER,* THOUGH.
RIGHT?
I'M *FINE.*
IT'S FINE.
MORE TIME FOR MY OTHER PROJECTS.
SORRY. THAT WAS A LITTLE *INSENSITIVE.*
WELL, I PROBABLY DESERVED IT.
ANY MORE *ARCHITECTURE* QUESTIONS, OR...?
SELENE'S IS THIS WEEK'S BIG IDEA FROM CORTEX INC. A RESTAURANT WHERE PERSONAL *SERVICE* EXTENDS TO A PERSONAL *CHEF.*
A COMBINATION *WAITER/SOUS-CHEF,* USING BLEEDING-EDGE *MOLECULAR GASTRONOMY* TO COOK THE MEAL AT YOUR TABLE. TERIYAKI *PLUS.*
FOR EXAMPLE, MY *MINUTE STEAK* IS BEING COOKED AND CARVED AT THE SAME TIME WITH AN EXTRA-STRENGTH *CUTTING LASER.*
CORA'S GETTING A *PEA-FOAM SORBET* FLASH-FROZEN IN A BUCKET OF *LIQUID NITROGEN.* IT'S ALL VERY PLEASANT.
I GUESS.
SO...OUT OF ALL THE GIN JOINTS IN ALL THE WORLD...
...WHY DID I WALK INTO *ANDERSON SIXTY'S?*
FUNNY STORY.
AND BELIEVE ME, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO *TELLING* IT.
TONY!
TONY STARK! SO GREAT TO *SEE* YOU!
HELLO, ANDERSON--
JUST DON'T LET *SYMKARIA* INVADE MY *RESTAURANT! HA HA!* NO, NO, I'M *JOKING...*
ARE YOU HERE ALL *WEEK?* SHOULD I TRY THE VEAL?
TONY--COME ON. WE'RE ON THE SAME *PAGE,* YOU AND I. WE CAN *LAUGH* TOGETHER, CAN'T WE?

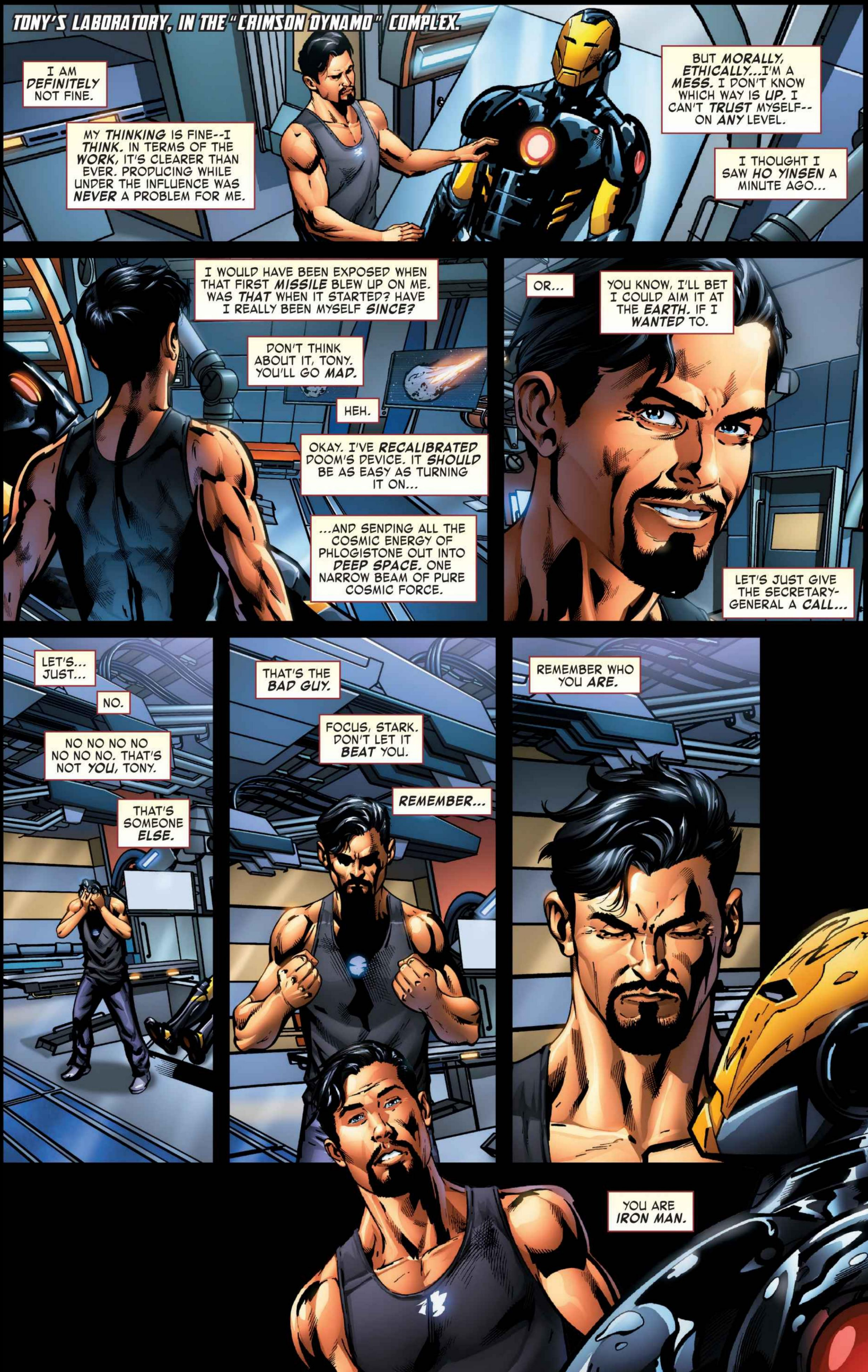

OF COURSE WE CAN. I STILL OWE YOU FOR DEALING WITH WARREN AND HIS FREAKSHOW.
I SAW THE SECURITY FOOTAGE, YOU KNOW. I KNOW HE WAS THE ONE WHO DESTROYED OUR RESEARCH.
HE WON'T BE MISSED, BELIEVE ME.
...WHAT?
WELL, NOBODY SAW HIM LEAVE, YES? I KNOW, THOUGH, NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS...
SPEAKING OF WHICH--CORA, SWEETHEART, DO YOU MIND IF I BORROW YOUR BOYFRIEND FOR A MOMENT?
MY INTERVIEW SUBJECT WAS JUST IN THE MIDDLE OF--
WONDERFUL!
SEE, TONY, I KNOW YOU'RE GOING THROUGH THE WARS AT THE MOMENT--NO PUN INTENDED, I PROMISE--
--BUT SCANDALS COME AND SCANDALS GO. FRIENDS ARE FOREVER. AND I'D LIKE TONY STARK AND CORTEX INC. TO BE...FIRM FRIENDS.
SHALL WE SHAKE ON IT?
C. ANDERSON SIXTY.
WHAT DOES THE C STAND FOR?

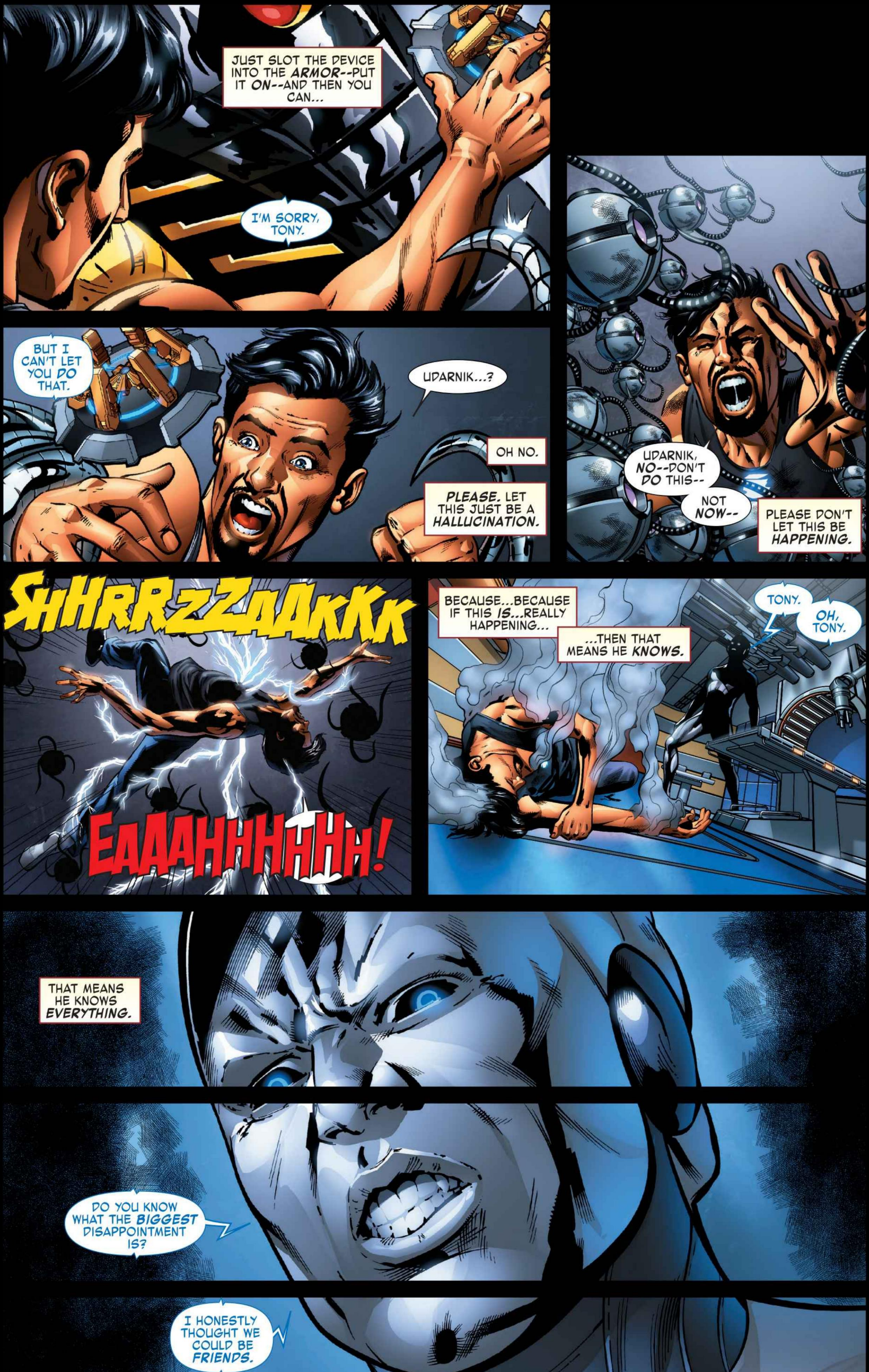

THIS WAY, PLEASE, MR. SIXTY--
UM-- SORRY, I DON'T--
NEVER MIND, I ALREADY KNOW.
IT STANDS FOR COLIN.
COLIN-60.
TONY, JUST--NOT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS, REMEMBER? JUST SMILE AND--
THAT'S HOW ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS NAMES THEIR CLONE OUTPUT, ISN'T IT?
YOU KNOW. THE TERRORIST GROUP.
ALTHOUGH I GUESS THEY'RE LEGITIMATE ENOUGH TO SELL THEIR WORK NOW, HUH?
TONY--
TONY, LET GO--
THE PERFECT SENIOR EXECUTIVE, MADE TO ORDER. WHY HIRE PEOPLE WHEN YOU CAN BUILD THEM FROM SCRATCH, RIGHT?
THAT'S-- THAT'S NONSENSE-- SLANDER--
LET GO OF ME--
I GOT THE PROOF FROM YOUR OWN FILES, SIXTY.
I MADE IT AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD WHEN YOU WALKED IN HERE. YOU'RE BEING DISAVOWED AS WE SPEAK.
NO-- YOU CAN'T HAVE--
COME ON, "ANDERSON."
SMILE FOR THE CAMERAS.
A CUTTER.
GIVE ME A CUTTER.
SIR? I--I DON'T THINK I CAN--
GIVE ME A CUTTER--
UNNNH--
EVEN IF HE'S NOT DISPOSED OF--AND I WOULDN'T PUT THAT PAST CORTEX--HIGH-LEVEL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS ARE ALL HE KNOWS.
ALL HE EXISTS FOR.
BUT WHO'D HAVE HIM NOW?
I'VE JUST TAKEN HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE. FOREVER.
IT'S NO WONDER HE GOES FOR THE NEAREST LASER CUTTER.

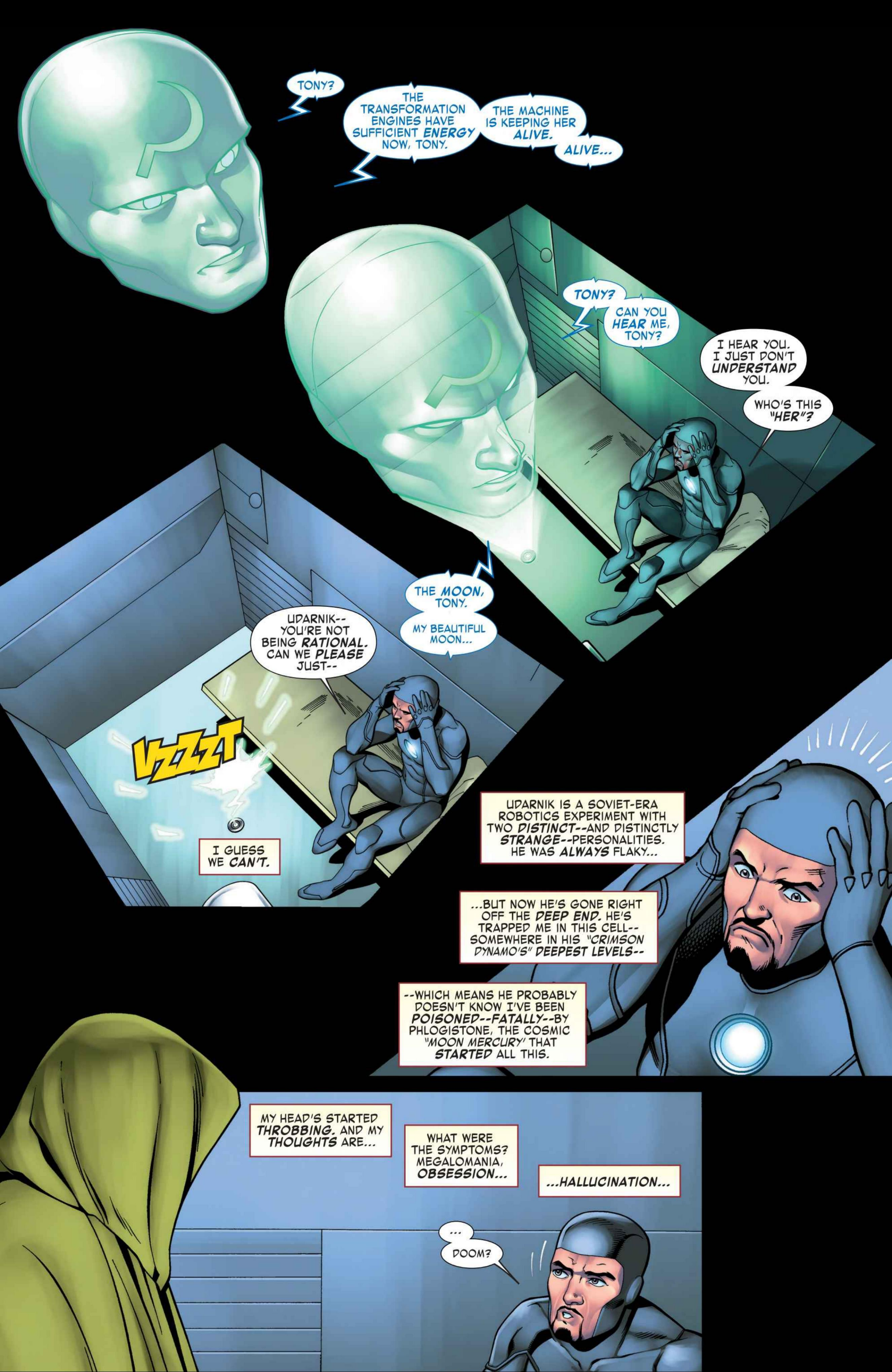

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD FEEL *GUILTY.*
I'LL TAKE *YOUR* LIFE AWAY, STARK!
AND I PROBABLY *WOULD,* IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER.
STAAAAARRRK--
IF I DIDN'T KNOW *BEST.*
MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING COURTESY OF *CAPTAIN AMERICA.* YOU DON'T GET *THAT* IN A CLONE TANK.
MAKE SURE TO GET THE *WEAPON* OUT OF HIS HAND--
THERE--
THE NITROGEN BUCKET--
SSSSKKRRKK
SCRATCH ONE DEADLY LASER KNIFE. WHO THOUGHT THAT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO BRING INTO A ROOMFUL OF DINERS?
AAHH! AAAH!
AAAAAHHHHH!

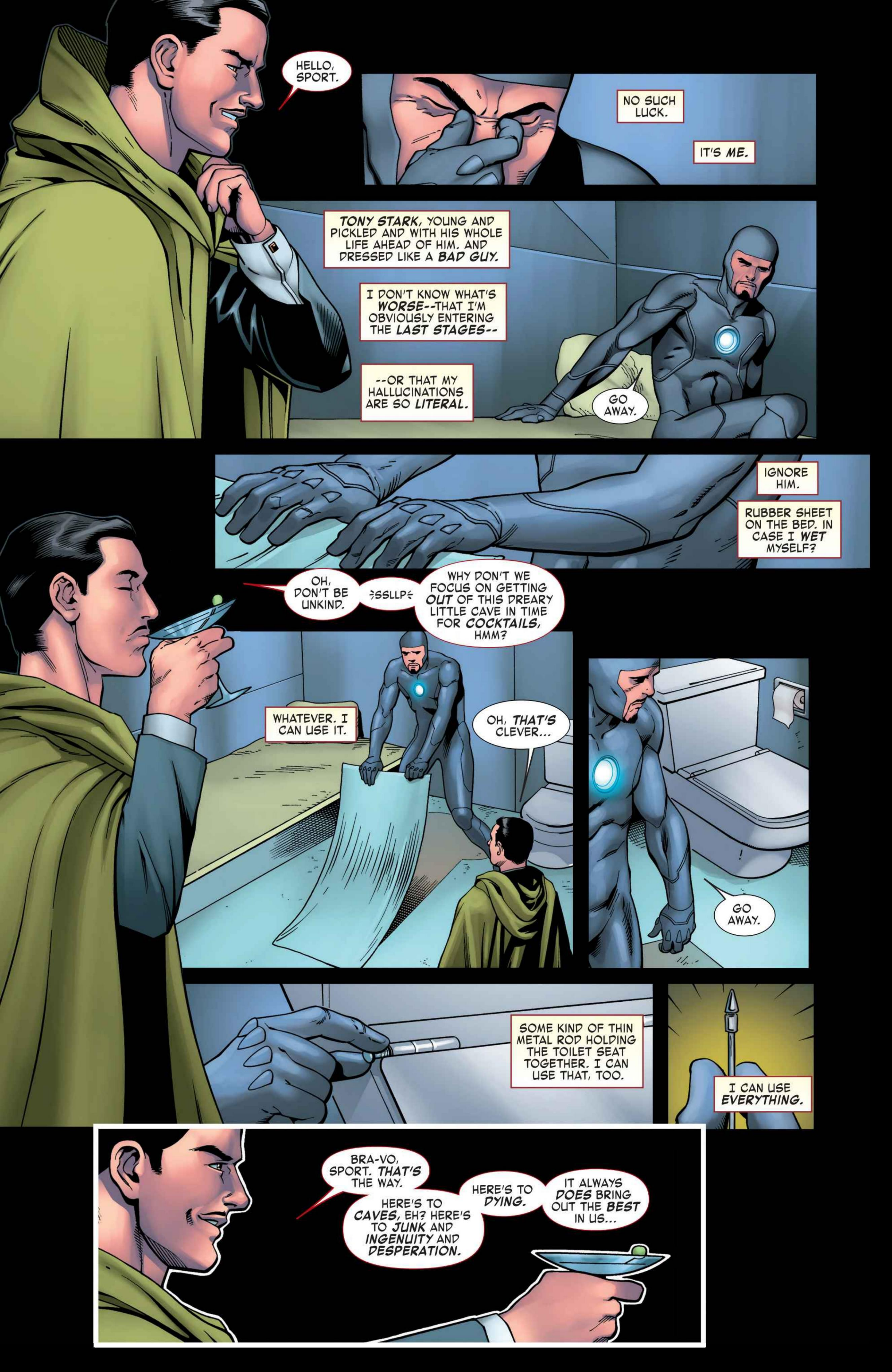

THIS GUY.
WHOKK
JUST DOING MY JOB, EVERYBODY.
I'M STILL SHERIFF FOR TONIGHT, AT LEAST.
THIS WAY, PLEASE, MISTER STARK--
MAKE SURE YOU GET MY GOOD SIDE, BOYS--
AND ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST...
TONY--HOW CAN YOU JOKE ABOUT THAT--?
WHAT? IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS IN ANY DANGER...
IT WAS A TRAINED AVENGER VERSUS A TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVE. YOU WERE NEVER IN DANGER.
BUT YOU DECIDED TO RUIN HIS LIFE AND MAIM HIS HAND--WHY, EXACTLY? WHY WAS THAT THE WAY TO DEAL WITH IT?
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE IMPRESSED.
CORA, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT WAS A REAL HUMAN BEING--
NOT A REAL--
YOU'RE SICK, TONY.
I'M... SICK...?
SYMPTOMS OF PHLOGISTONE POISONING INCLUDE:
MEGALOMANIA.
OBSESSION.
PSYCHOSIS.
HALLUCINATIONS.
AND, EVENTUALLY, DEATH.
NO. I'M FINE.
I'M FINE.
AND CORTEX NEEDED TO LEARN THEIR LESSON.

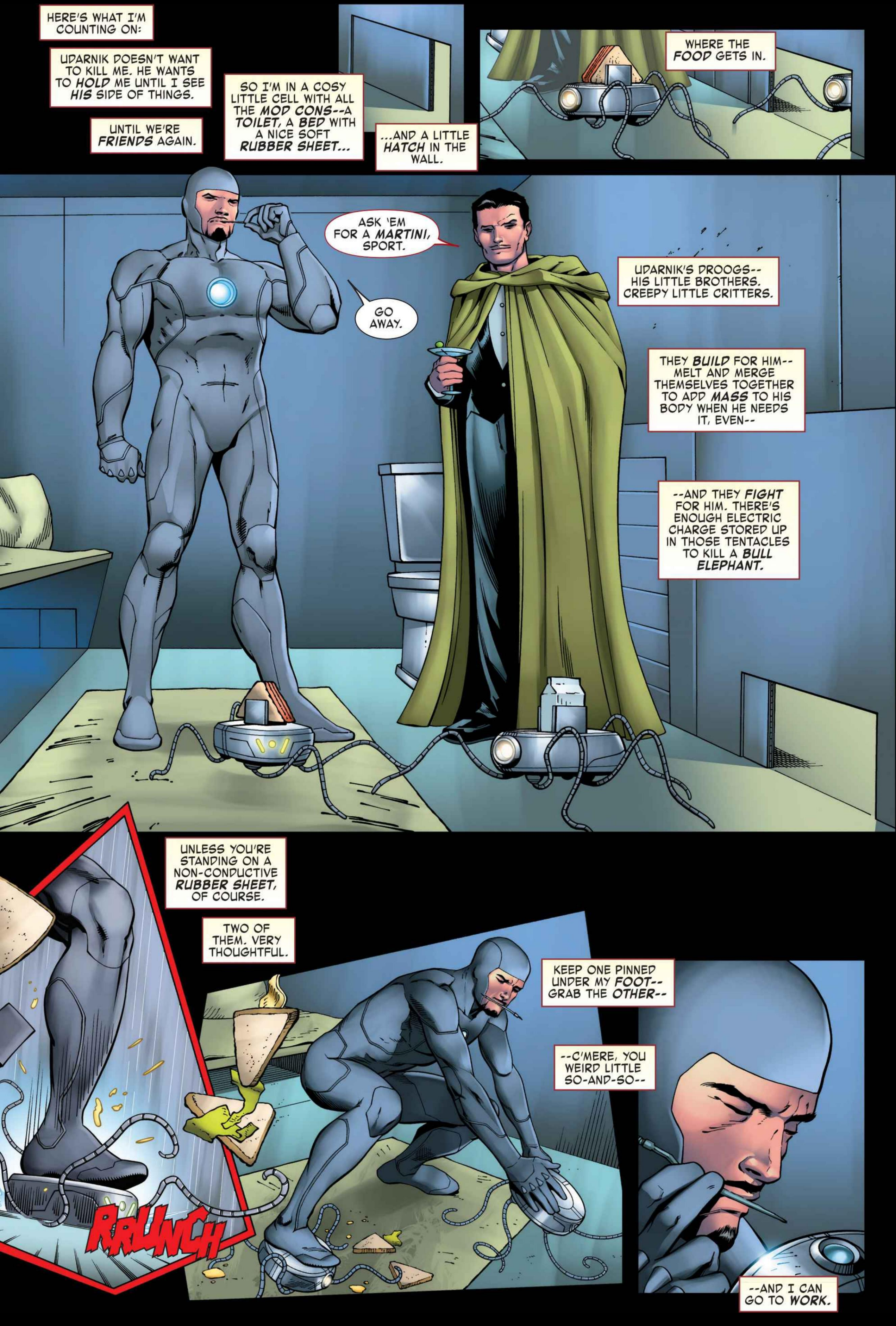

THEY WERE FIELD-TESTING GROWING THEIR OWN WORKERS, CORA. FOR ALL POSITIONS.
CLONE-GROWN SLAVE LABOR, UP HERE WHERE THEY THOUGHT THE LAWS WOULD BE A LITTLE LOOSER.
WELL, I'M STILL THE SHERIFF, CORA. UP HERE, I AM THE LAW.
AND IF YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT-- IF YOU CAN'T ACCEPT THAT TONY KNOWS BEST...
WELL.
MAYBE YOU NEED TO LEARN A LESSON TOO.
GOODBYE, TONY.
HEY! GET BACK HERE!
I'M NOT DONE TALKING-- GET BACK HERE! RIGHT NOW!
I'M NOT DONE TALKING TO YOU--
I KEEP A GUN IN MY HOTEL ROOM, STARK.
SHOW UP THERE AGAIN AND I'LL USE IT.
DID I JUST... DID I...?
THERE'S A DRINK ON THE TABLE. I DIDN'T ORDER IT. I DON'T REMEMBER THE WAITER BRINGING IT.
I...I THINK IT'S REALLY THERE... BUT...
I'M...
...NOT FINE.
AM I?

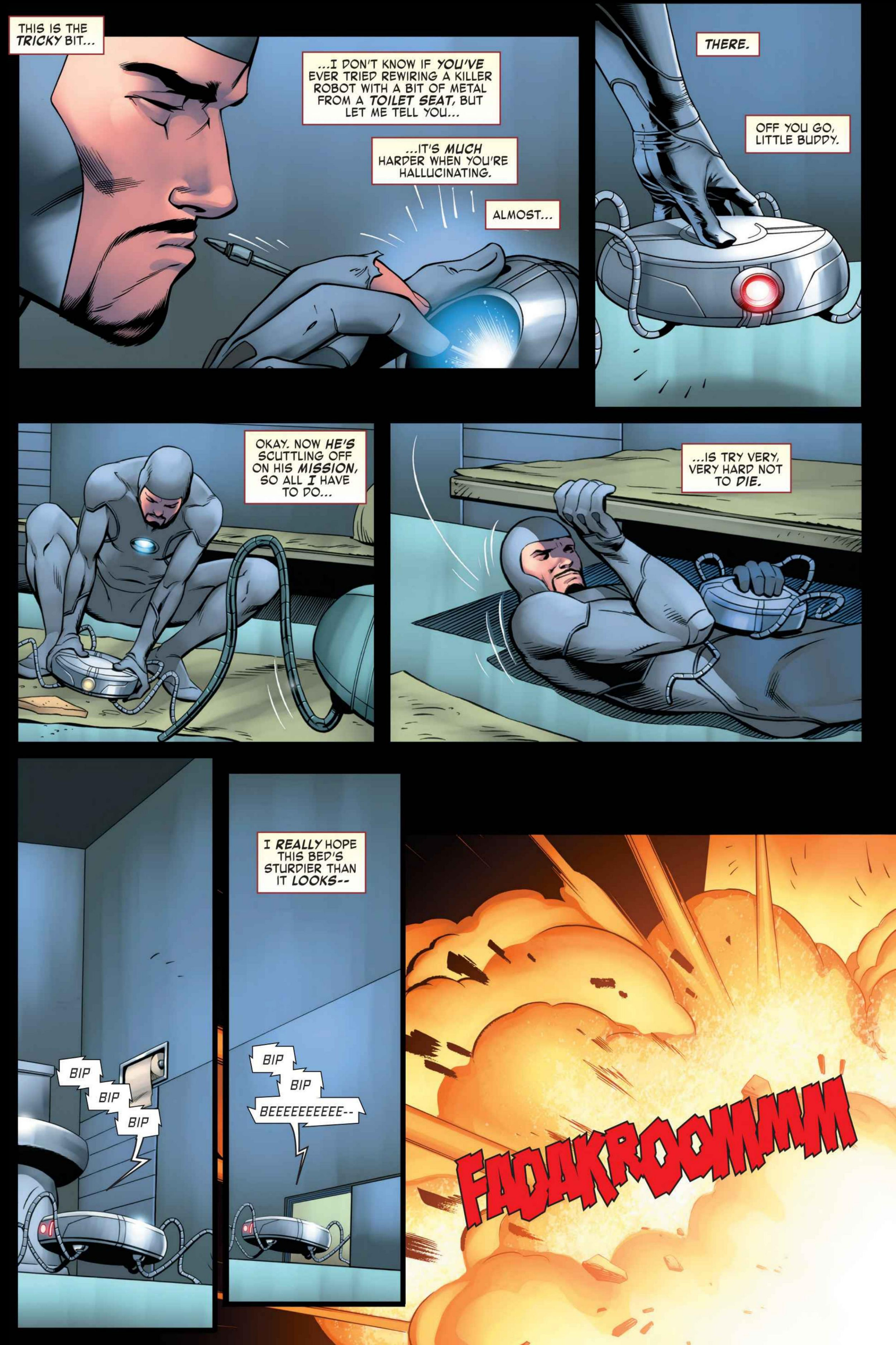

TONY'S LABORATORY, IN THE "CRIMSON DYNAMO" COMPLEX.
I AM *DEFINITELY* NOT FINE.
MY *THINKING* IS FINE--I *THINK.* IN TERMS OF THE *WORK,* IT'S CLEARER THAN EVER. PRODUCING WHILE UNDER THE INFLUENCE WAS *NEVER* A PROBLEM FOR ME.
BUT *MORALLY, ETHICALLY*...I'M A *MESS.* I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS *UP.* I CAN'T *TRUST* MYSELF--ON *ANY* LEVEL.
I THOUGHT I SAW *HO YINSEN* A MINUTE AGO...
I WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPOSED WHEN THAT FIRST *MISSILE* BLEW UP ON ME. WAS *THAT* WHEN IT STARTED? HAVE I REALLY BEEN MYSELF *SINCE?*
DON'T THINK ABOUT IT, TONY. YOU'LL GO *MAD.*
HEH.
OKAY. I'VE *RECALIBRATED* DOOM'S DEVICE. IT *SHOULD* BE AS EASY AS TURNING IT ON...
...AND SENDING ALL THE COSMIC ENERGY OF PHLOGISTONE OUT INTO *DEEP SPACE.* ONE NARROW BEAM OF PURE COSMIC FORCE.
OR...
YOU KNOW, I'LL BET I COULD AIM IT AT THE *EARTH.* IF I *WANTED* TO.
LET'S JUST GIVE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL A *CALL*...
LET'S... JUST...
NO.
NO NO NO NO NO NO NO. THAT'S NOT *YOU,* TONY.
THAT'S SOMEONE *ELSE.*
THAT'S THE *BAD GUY.*
FOCUS, STARK. DON'T LET IT *BEAT* YOU.
REMEMBER...
REMEMBER WHO YOU *ARE.*
YOU ARE *IRON MAN.*

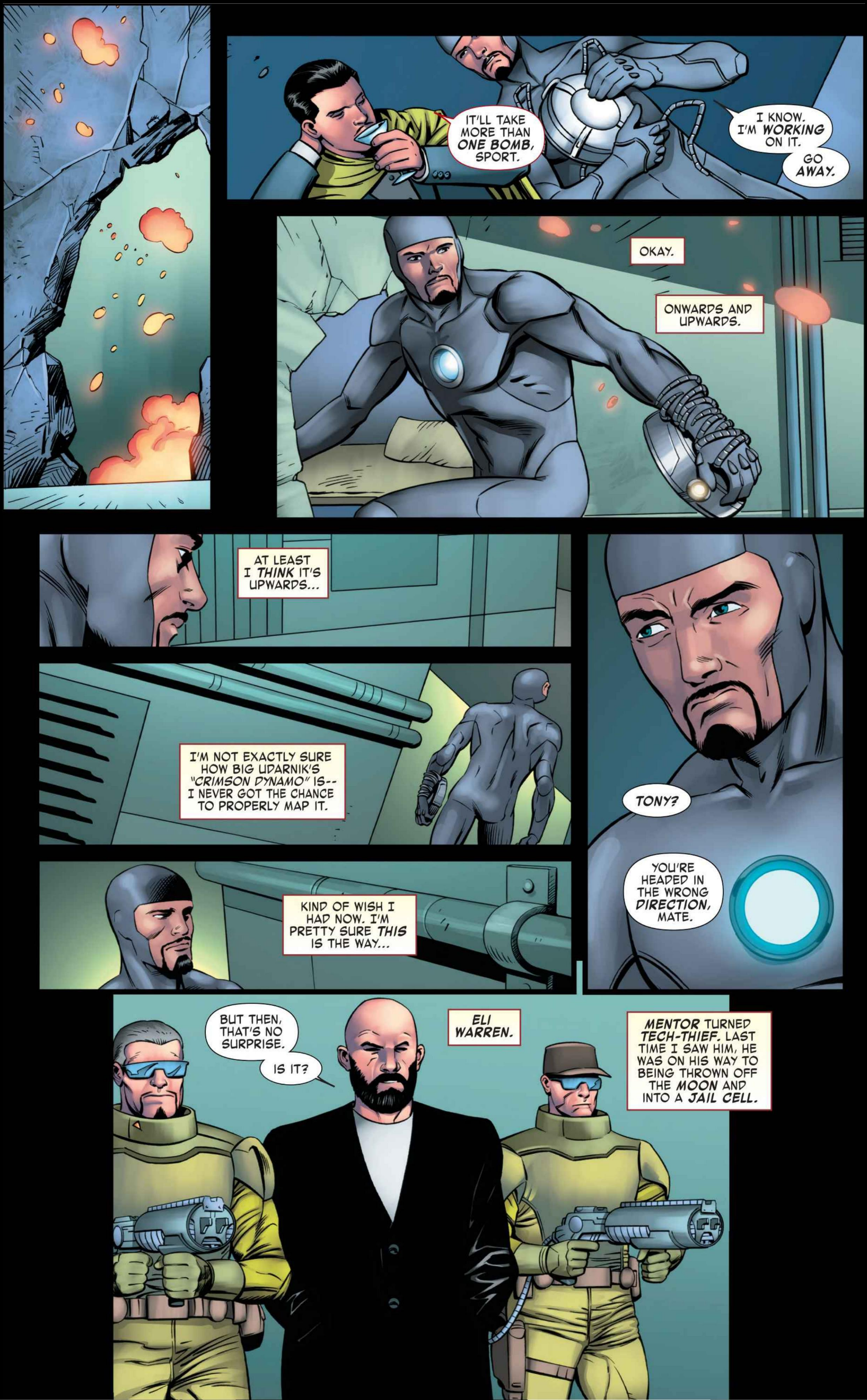

JUST SLOT THE DEVICE INTO THE *ARMOR*--PUT IT *ON*--AND THEN YOU CAN...
I'M SORRY, TONY.
BUT I CAN'T LET YOU *DO* THAT.
UDARNIK...?
OH NO.
PLEASE. LET THIS JUST BE A *HALLUCINATION.*
UDARNIK, *NO*--DON'T *DO* THIS--
NOT *NOW*--
PLEASE DON'T LET THIS BE *HAPPENING.*
SHHRRZZAAKKK
EAAAHHHHHH!
BECAUSE...BECAUSE IF THIS *IS*...REALLY HAPPENING...
...THEN THAT MEANS HE *KNOWS.*
TONY.
OH, TONY.
THAT MEANS HE KNOWS *EVERYTHING.*
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE *BIGGEST* DISAPPOINTMENT IS?
I HONESTLY THOUGHT WE COULD BE *FRIENDS.*

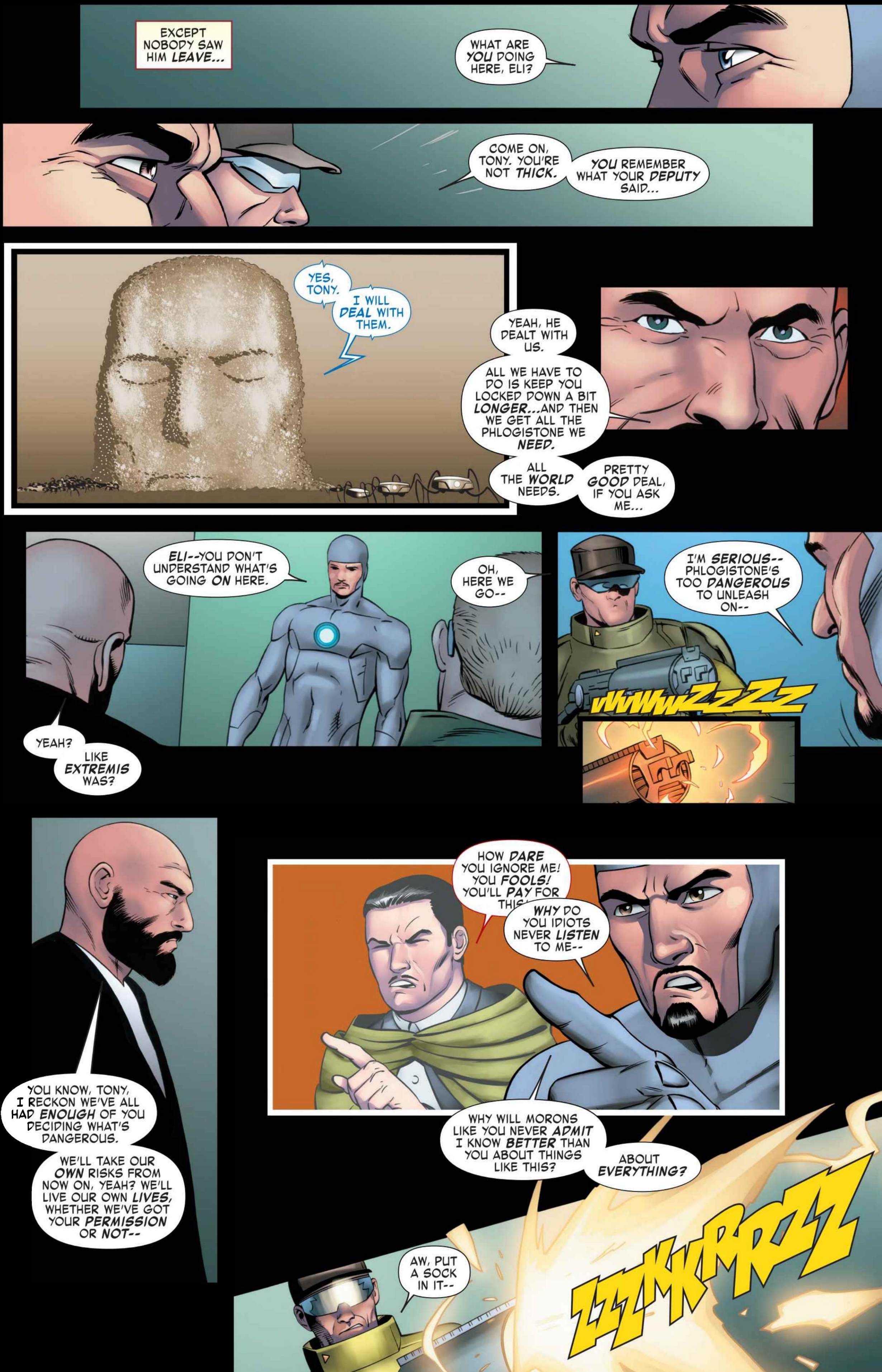

TONY?
THE TRANSFORMATION ENGINES HAVE SUFFICIENT *ENERGY* NOW, TONY.
THE MACHINE IS KEEPING HER *ALIVE.*
ALIVE...
TONY?
CAN YOU *HEAR* ME, TONY?
I HEAR YOU. I JUST DON'T *UNDERSTAND* YOU.
WHO'S THIS *"HER"?*
THE *MOON,* TONY.
MY BEAUTIFUL MOON...
UDARNIK-- YOU'RE NOT BEING *RATIONAL.* CAN WE *PLEASE* JUST--
VZZZT
I GUESS WE *CAN'T.*
UDARNIK IS A SOVIET-ERA ROBOTICS EXPERIMENT WITH TWO *DISTINCT*--AND DISTINCTLY *STRANGE*--PERSONALITIES. HE WAS *ALWAYS* FLAKY...
...BUT NOW HE'S GONE RIGHT OFF THE *DEEP END.* HE'S TRAPPED ME IN THIS CELL-- SOMEWHERE IN HIS *"CRIMSON DYNAMO'S" DEEPEST LEVELS*--
--WHICH MEANS HE PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW I'VE BEEN *POISONED*--*FATALLY*--BY PHLOGISTONE, THE COSMIC *"MOON MERCURY"* THAT *STARTED* ALL THIS.
MY HEAD'S STARTED *THROBBING.* AND MY *THOUGHTS* ARE...
WHAT WERE THE SYMPTOMS? MEGALOMANIA, *OBSESSION...*
...HALLUCINATION...
...
DOOM?

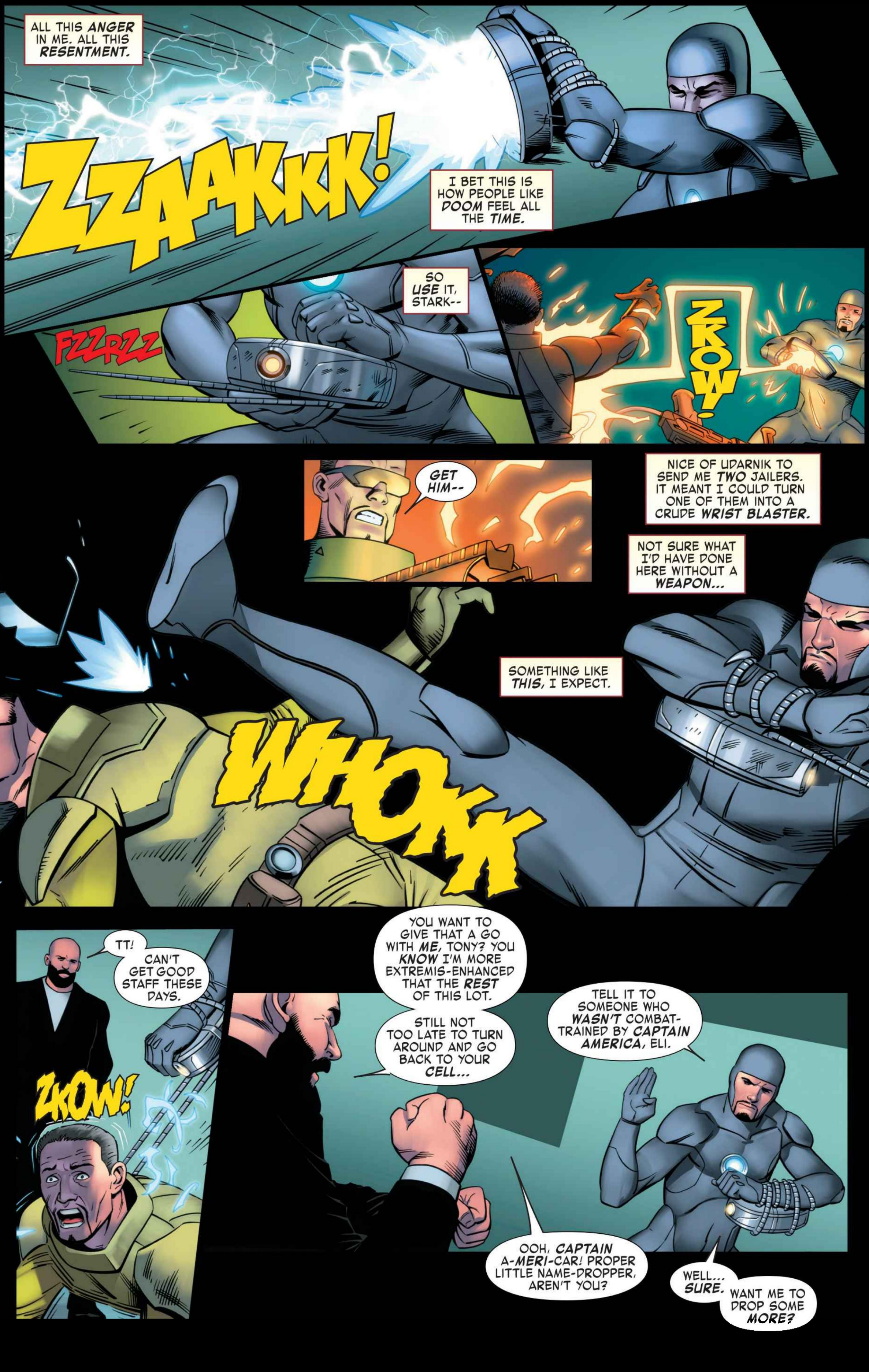

HELLO, SPORT.
NO SUCH LUCK.
IT'S ME.
TONY STARK, YOUNG AND PICKLED AND WITH HIS WHOLE LIFE AHEAD OF HIM. AND DRESSED LIKE A BAD GUY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WORSE--THAT I'M OBVIOUSLY ENTERING THE LAST STAGES--
--OR THAT MY HALLUCINATIONS ARE SO LITERAL.
GO AWAY.
IGNORE HIM.
RUBBER SHEET ON THE BED. IN CASE I WET MYSELF?
OH, DON'T BE UNKIND.
≠SSLLP≠
WHY DON'T WE FOCUS ON GETTING OUT OF THIS DREARY LITTLE CAVE IN TIME FOR COCKTAILS, HMM?
WHATEVER. I CAN USE IT.
OH, THAT'S CLEVER...
GO AWAY.
SOME KIND OF THIN METAL ROD HOLDING THE TOILET SEAT TOGETHER. I CAN USE THAT, TOO.
I CAN USE EVERYTHING.
BRA-VO, SPORT. THAT'S THE WAY.
HERE'S TO CAVES, EH? HERE'S TO JUNK AND INGENUITY AND DESPERATION.
HERE'S TO DYING.
IT ALWAYS DOES BRING OUT THE BEST IN US...

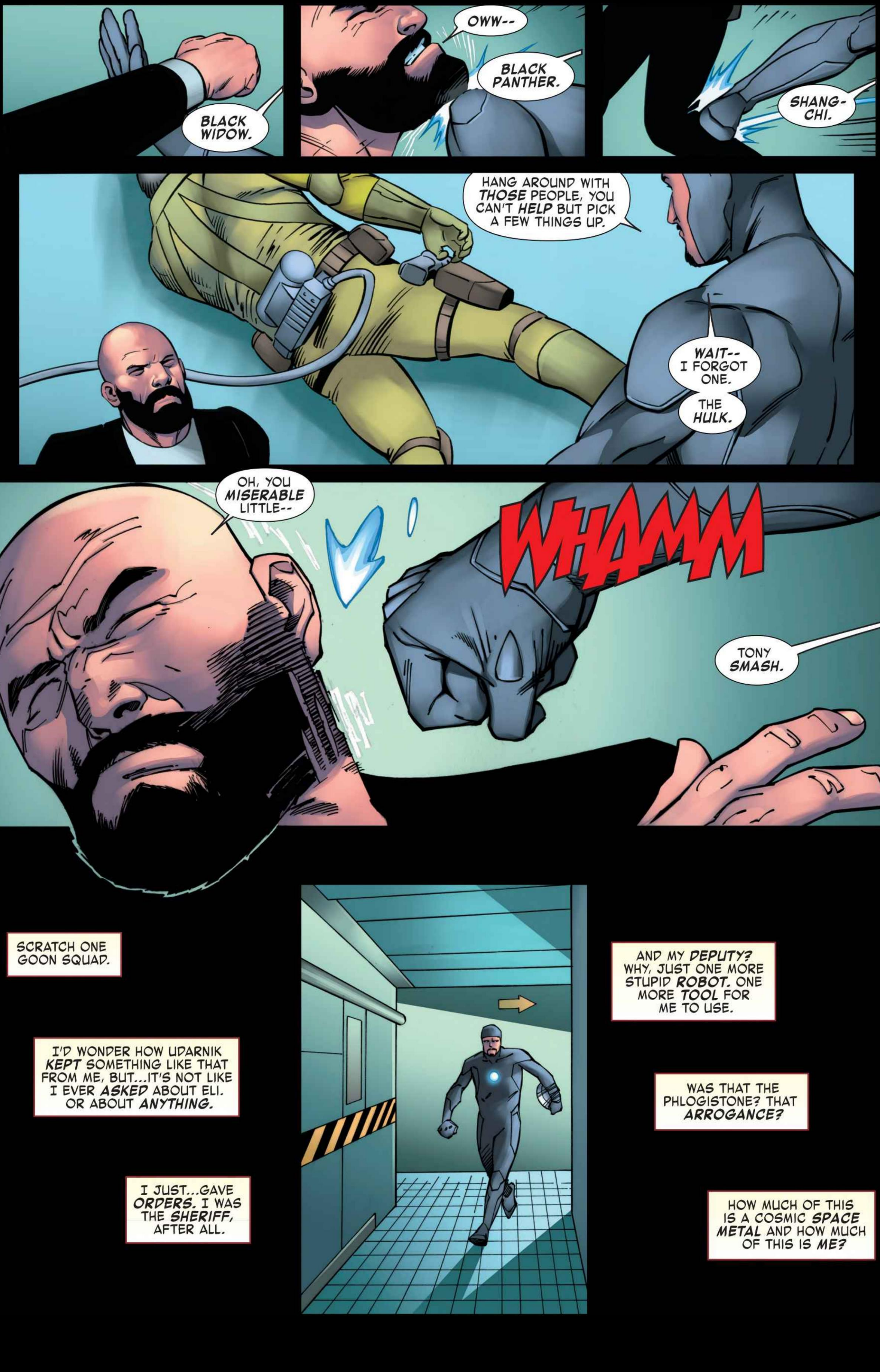

HERE'S WHAT I'M COUNTING ON:
UDARNIK DOESN'T WANT TO KILL ME. HE WANTS TO HOLD ME UNTIL I SEE HIS SIDE OF THINGS.
UNTIL WE'RE FRIENDS AGAIN.
SO I'M IN A COSY LITTLE CELL WITH ALL THE MOD CONS--A TOILET, A BED WITH A NICE SOFT RUBBER SHEET...
...AND A LITTLE HATCH IN THE WALL.
WHERE THE FOOD GETS IN.
ASK 'EM FOR A MARTINI, SPORT.
GO AWAY.
UDARNIK'S DROOGS--HIS LITTLE BROTHERS. CREEPY LITTLE CRITTERS.
THEY BUILD FOR HIM--MELT AND MERGE THEMSELVES TOGETHER TO ADD MASS TO HIS BODY WHEN HE NEEDS IT, EVEN--
--AND THEY FIGHT FOR HIM. THERE'S ENOUGH ELECTRIC CHARGE STORED UP IN THOSE TENTACLES TO KILL A BULL ELEPHANT.
UNLESS YOU'RE STANDING ON A NON-CONDUCTIVE RUBBER SHEET, OF COURSE.
TWO OF THEM. VERY THOUGHTFUL.
RRUNCH
KEEP ONE PINNED UNDER MY FOOT--GRAB THE OTHER--
--C'MERE, YOU WEIRD LITTLE SO-AND-SO--
--AND I CAN GO TO WORK.

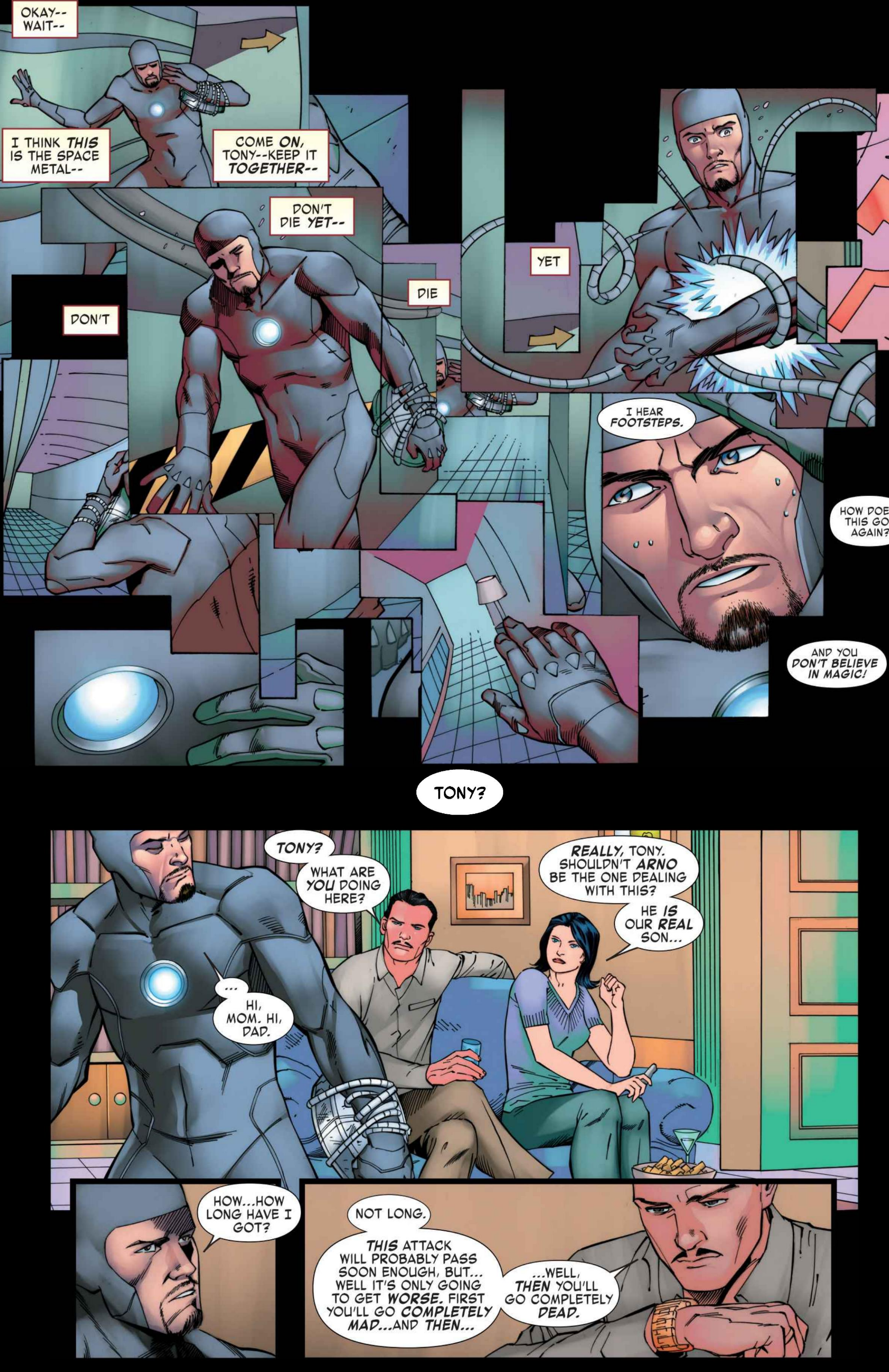

THIS IS THE TRICKY BIT...
...I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE EVER TRIED REWIRING A KILLER ROBOT WITH A BIT OF METAL FROM A TOILET SEAT, BUT LET ME TELL YOU...
...IT'S MUCH HARDER WHEN YOU'RE HALLUCINATING.
ALMOST...
THERE.
OFF YOU GO, LITTLE BUDDY.
OKAY. NOW HE'S SCUTTLING OFF ON HIS MISSION, SO ALL I HAVE TO DO...
...IS TRY VERY, VERY HARD NOT TO DIE.
BIP
BIP
BIP
I REALLY HOPE THIS BED'S STURDIER THAN IT LOOKS--
BIP
BIP
BEEEEEEEEEE--
FADAKROOMMM

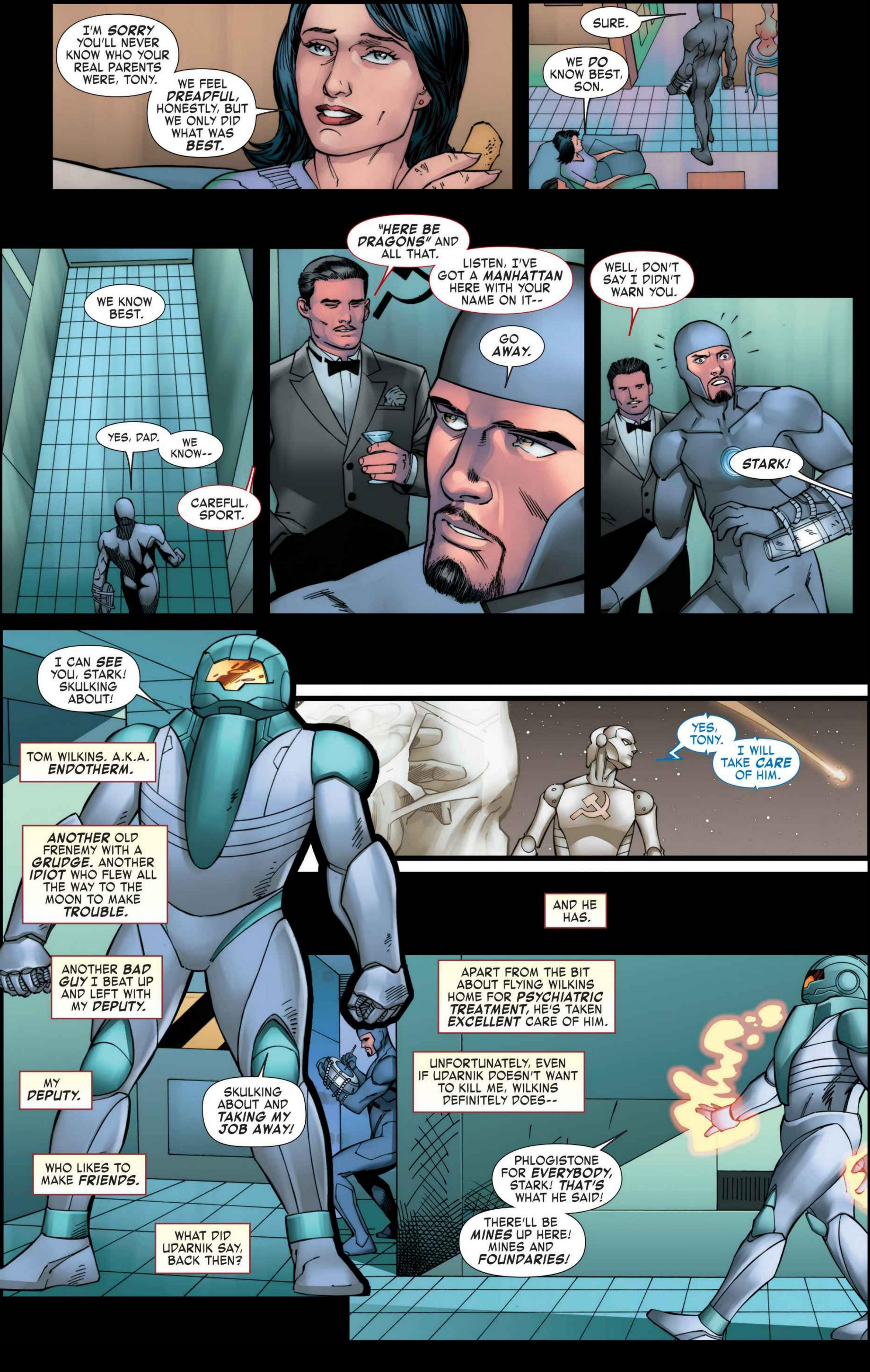

IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN *ONE BOMB*, SPORT.
I KNOW. I'M *WORKING* ON IT.
GO *AWAY.*
OKAY.
ONWARDS AND UPWARDS.
AT LEAST I *THINK* IT'S UPWARDS...
I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE HOW BIG UDARNIK'S *"CRIMSON DYNAMO"* IS-- I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO PROPERLY MAP IT.
KIND OF WISH I HAD NOW. I'M PRETTY SURE *THIS* IS THE WAY...
TONY?
YOU'RE HEADED IN THE WRONG *DIRECTION,* MATE.
BUT THEN, THAT'S NO SURPRISE.
IS IT?
ELI WARREN.
MENTOR TURNED *TECH-THIEF.* LAST TIME I SAW HIM, HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO BEING THROWN OFF THE *MOON* AND INTO A *JAIL CELL.*

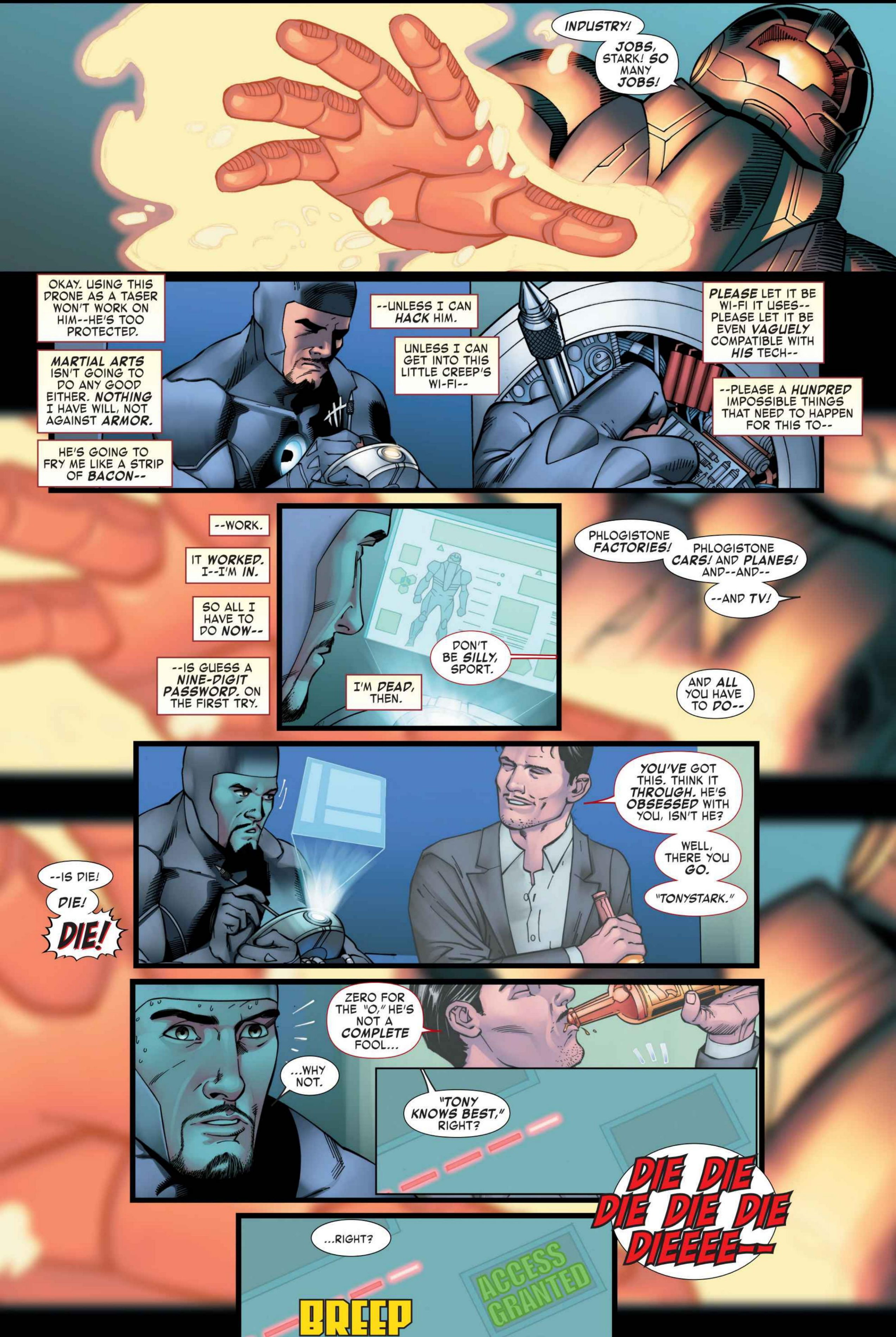

EXCEPT NOBODY SAW HIM *LEAVE...*
WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE, ELI?
COME ON, TONY. YOU'RE NOT *THICK.*
YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOUR *DEPUTY* SAID...
YES, TONY. I WILL *DEAL* WITH THEM.
YEAH, HE DEALT WITH US.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS KEEP YOU LOCKED DOWN A BIT *LONGER...*AND THEN WE GET ALL THE PHLOGISTONE WE *NEED.*
ALL THE *WORLD* NEEDS.
PRETTY *GOOD* DEAL, IF YOU ASK ME...
*ELI--*YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING *ON* HERE.
OH, HERE WE GO--
YEAH? LIKE *EXTREMIS* WAS?
I'M *SERIOUS--* PHLOGISTONE'S TOO *DANGEROUS* TO UNLEASH ON--
VWWWWZZZZ
YOU KNOW, TONY, *I* RECKON WE'VE ALL HAD *ENOUGH* OF YOU DECIDING WHAT'S DANGEROUS.
WE'LL TAKE OUR *OWN* RISKS FROM NOW ON, YEAH? WE'LL LIVE OUR OWN *LIVES,* WHETHER WE'VE GOT YOUR *PERMISSION* OR *NOT--*
HOW *DARE* YOU IGNORE ME! YOU *FOOLS!* YOU'LL *PAY* FOR THIS!
WHY DO YOU IDIOTS NEVER *LISTEN* TO ME--
WHY WILL MORONS LIKE YOU NEVER *ADMIT* I KNOW *BETTER* THAN YOU ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS?
ABOUT *EVERYTHING?*
AW, PUT A SOCK IN IT--
ZZZKKRRZZ

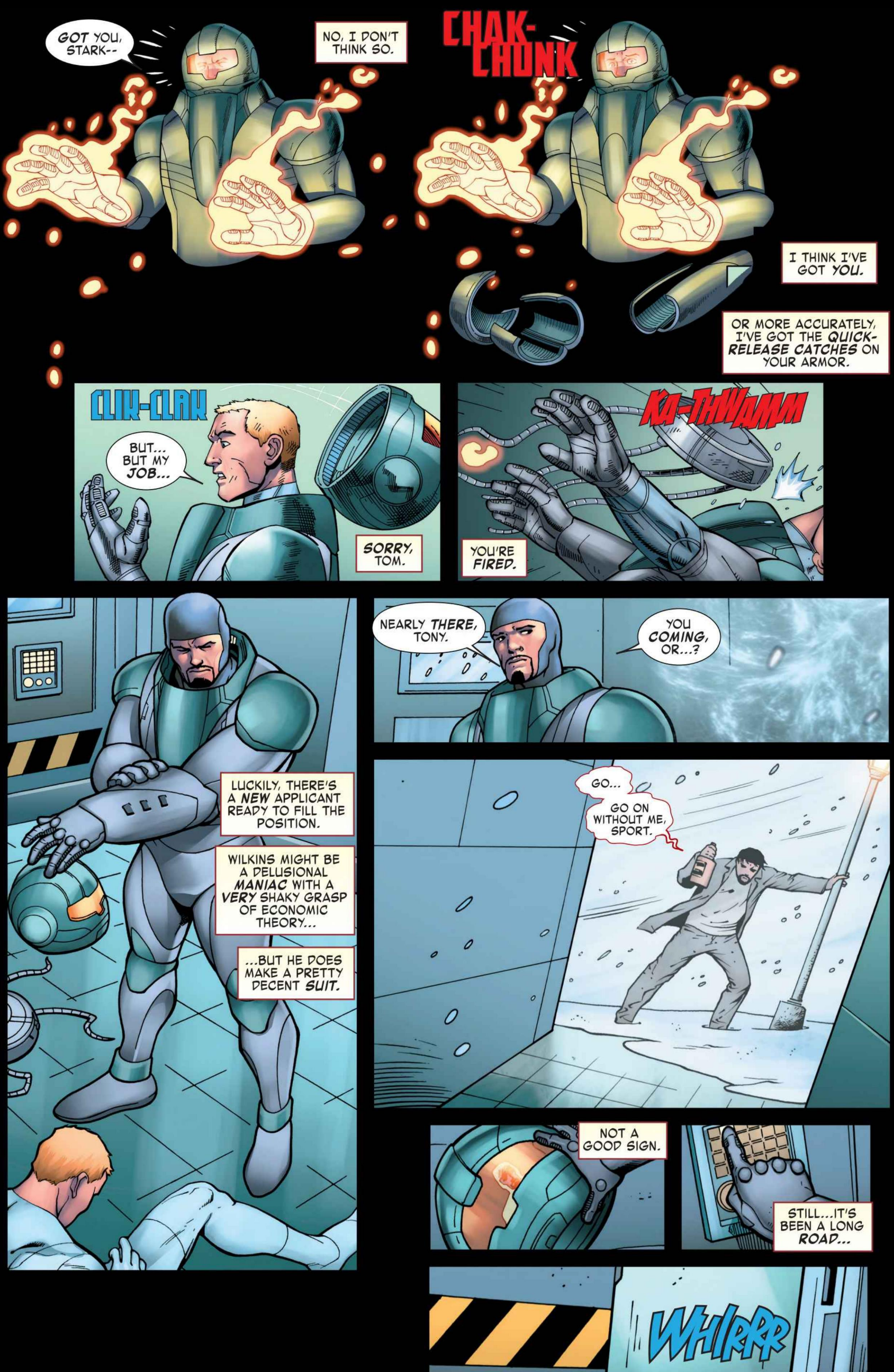

ALL THIS *ANGER* IN ME. ALL THIS *RESENTMENT.*
ZZAAKKK!
I BET THIS IS HOW PEOPLE LIKE *DOOM* FEEL ALL THE *TIME.*
FZZRZZ
SO *USE* IT, STARK--
ZKOW!
GET HIM--
NICE OF UDARNIK TO SEND ME *TWO* JAILERS. IT MEANT I COULD TURN ONE OF THEM INTO A CRUDE *WRIST BLASTER.*
NOT SURE WHAT I'D HAVE DONE HERE WITHOUT A *WEAPON...*
SOMETHING LIKE *THIS,* I EXPECT.
WHOKK
TT! CAN'T GET GOOD STAFF THESE DAYS.
ZKOW!
YOU WANT TO GIVE THAT A GO WITH *ME,* TONY? YOU *KNOW* I'M MORE EXTREMIS-ENHANCED THAT THE *REST* OF THIS LOT.
STILL NOT TOO LATE TO TURN AROUND AND GO BACK TO YOUR *CELL...*
TELL IT TO SOMEONE WHO *WASN'T* COMBAT-TRAINED BY *CAPTAIN AMERICA,* ELI.
OOH, *CAPTAIN* A-*MERI*-CAR! PROPER LITTLE NAME-DROPPER, AREN'T YOU?
WELL... *SURE.*
WANT ME TO DROP SOME *MORE?*

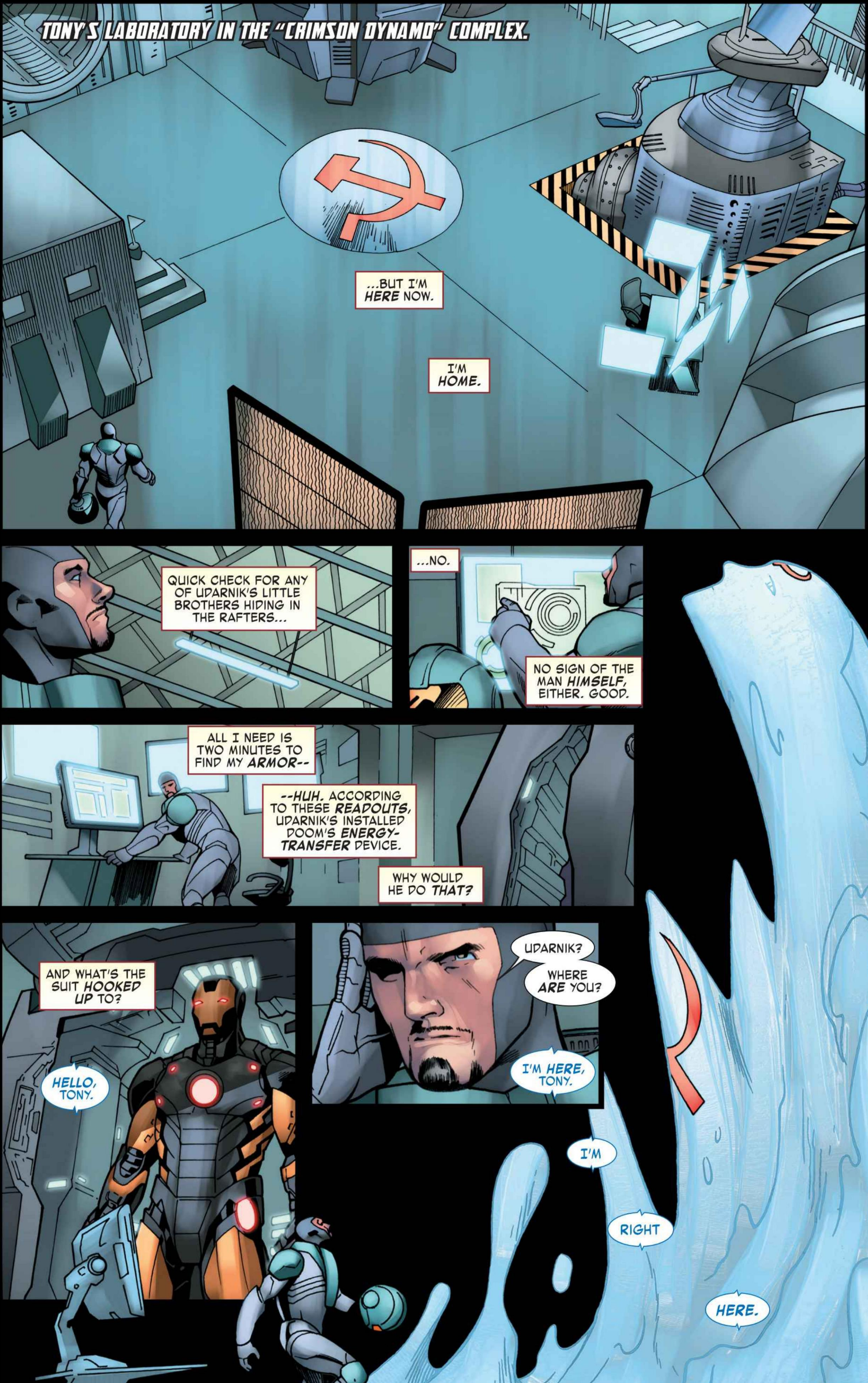

BLACK WIDOW.
OWW--
BLACK PANTHER.
SHANG-CHI.
HANG AROUND WITH *THOSE* PEOPLE, YOU CAN'T *HELP* BUT PICK A FEW THINGS UP.
WAIT-- I FORGOT ONE.
THE *HULK.*
OH, YOU *MISERABLE* LITTLE--
WHAMM
TONY *SMASH.*
SCRATCH ONE GOON SQUAD.
I'D WONDER HOW UDARNIK *KEPT* SOMETHING LIKE THAT FROM ME, BUT...IT'S NOT LIKE I EVER *ASKED* ABOUT ELI. OR ABOUT *ANYTHING.*
I JUST...GAVE *ORDERS.* I WAS THE *SHERIFF,* AFTER ALL.
AND MY *DEPUTY?* WHY, JUST ONE MORE STUPID *ROBOT.* ONE MORE *TOOL* FOR ME TO USE.
WAS THAT THE PHLOGISTONE? THAT *ARROGANCE?*
HOW MUCH OF THIS IS A COSMIC *SPACE METAL* AND HOW MUCH OF THIS IS *ME?*

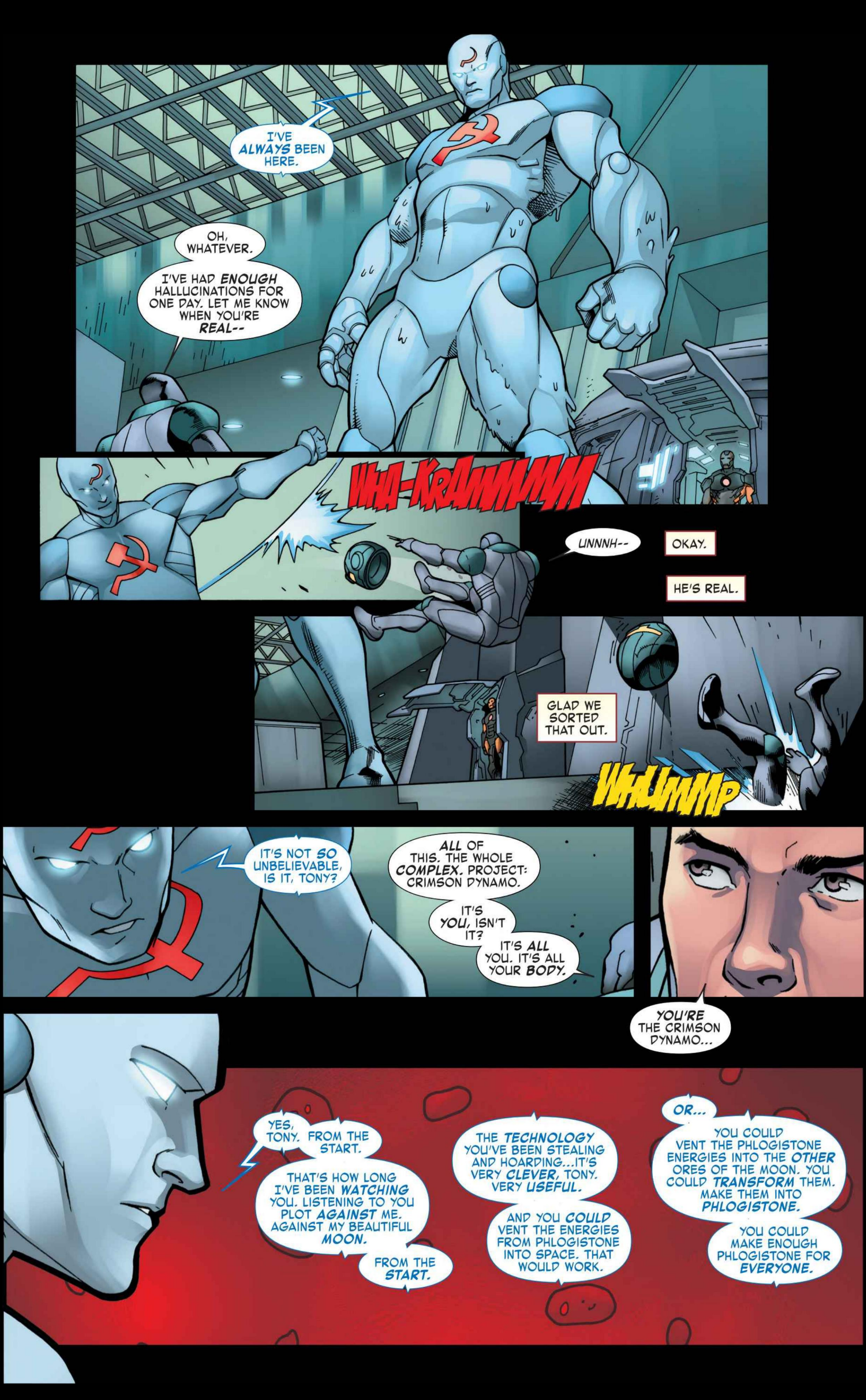

OKAY-- WAIT--
I THINK *THIS* IS THE SPACE METAL--
COME *ON,* TONY--KEEP IT *TOGETHER--*
DON'T DIE *YET--*
DON'T
DIE
YET
I HEAR *FOOTSTEPS.*
HOW DOES THIS GO, AGAIN?
AND YOU *DON'T BELIEVE IN MAGIC!*
TONY?
TONY?
WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?
REALLY, TONY. SHOULDN'T *ARNO* BE THE ONE DEALING WITH THIS?
HE *IS* OUR *REAL* SON...
... HI, MOM. HI, DAD.
HOW...HOW LONG HAVE I GOT?
NOT LONG.
THIS ATTACK WILL PROBABLY PASS SOON ENOUGH, BUT... WELL IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET *WORSE.* FIRST YOU'LL GO *COMPLETELY MAD...*AND *THEN...*
...WELL, *THEN* YOU'LL GO COMPLETELY *DEAD.*

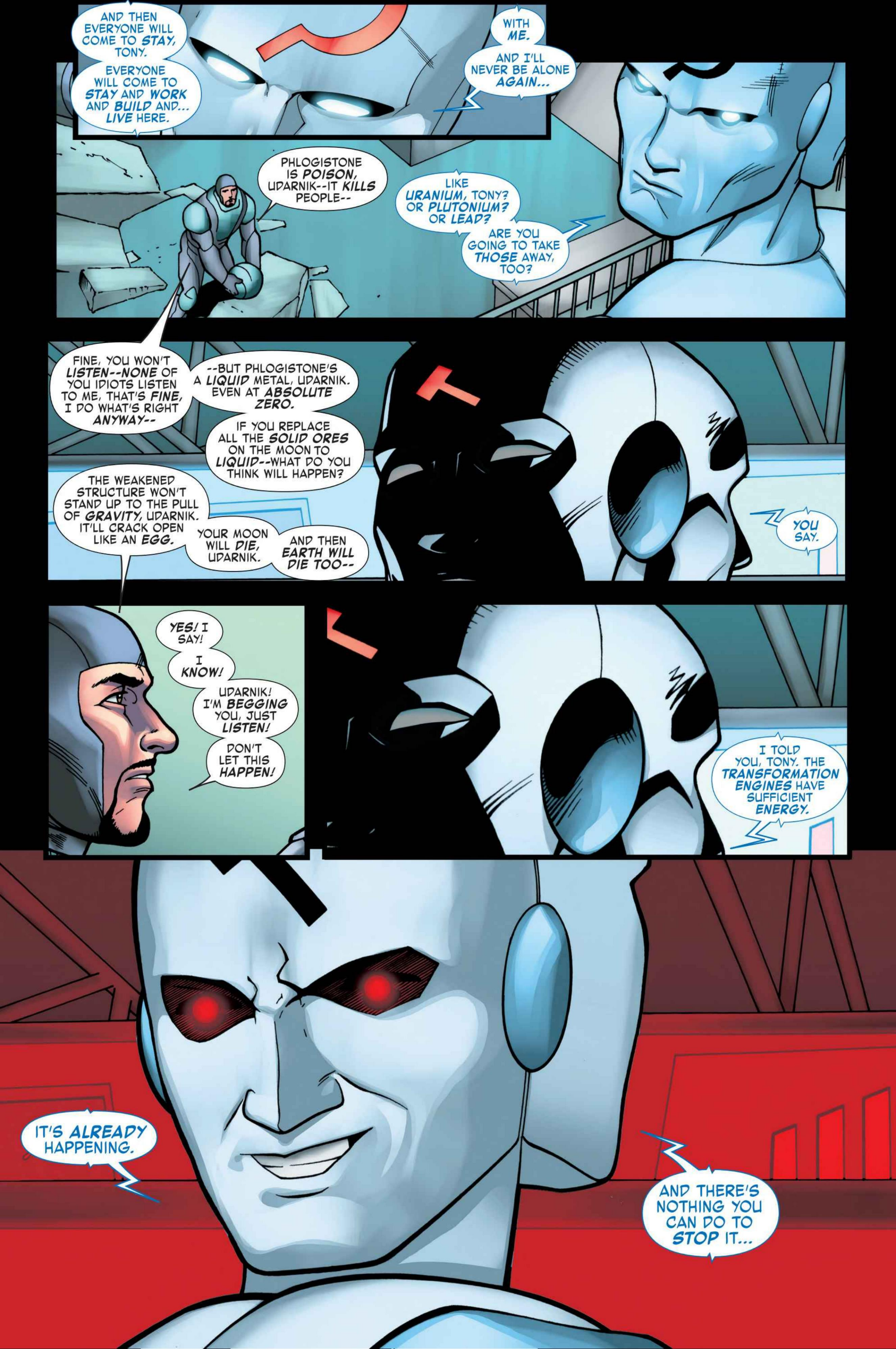

I'M SORRY YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHO YOUR REAL PARENTS WERE, TONY.
WE FEEL DREADFUL, HONESTLY, BUT WE ONLY DID WHAT WAS BEST.
SURE.
WE DO KNOW BEST, SON.
WE KNOW BEST.
YES, DAD.
WE KNOW--
CAREFUL, SPORT.
"HERE BE DRAGONS" AND ALL THAT.
LISTEN, I'VE GOT A MANHATTAN HERE WITH YOUR NAME ON IT--
GO AWAY.
WELL, DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.
STARK!
I CAN SEE YOU, STARK! SKULKING ABOUT!
TOM WILKINS. A.K.A. ENDOTHERM.
ANOTHER OLD FRENEMY WITH A GRUDGE. ANOTHER IDIOT WHO FLEW ALL THE WAY TO THE MOON TO MAKE TROUBLE.
ANOTHER BAD GUY I BEAT UP AND LEFT WITH MY DEPUTY.
MY DEPUTY.
SKULKING ABOUT AND TAKING MY JOB AWAY!
WHO LIKES TO MAKE FRIENDS.
WHAT DID UDARNIK SAY, BACK THEN?
YES, TONY.
I WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM.
AND HE HAS.
APART FROM THE BIT ABOUT FLYING WILKINS HOME FOR PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT, HE'S TAKEN EXCELLENT CARE OF HIM.
UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN IF UDARNIK DOESN'T WANT TO KILL ME, WILKINS DEFINITELY DOES--
PHLOGISTONE FOR EVERYBODY, STARK! THAT'S WHAT HE SAID!
THERE'LL BE MINES UP HERE! MINES AND FOUNDARIES!

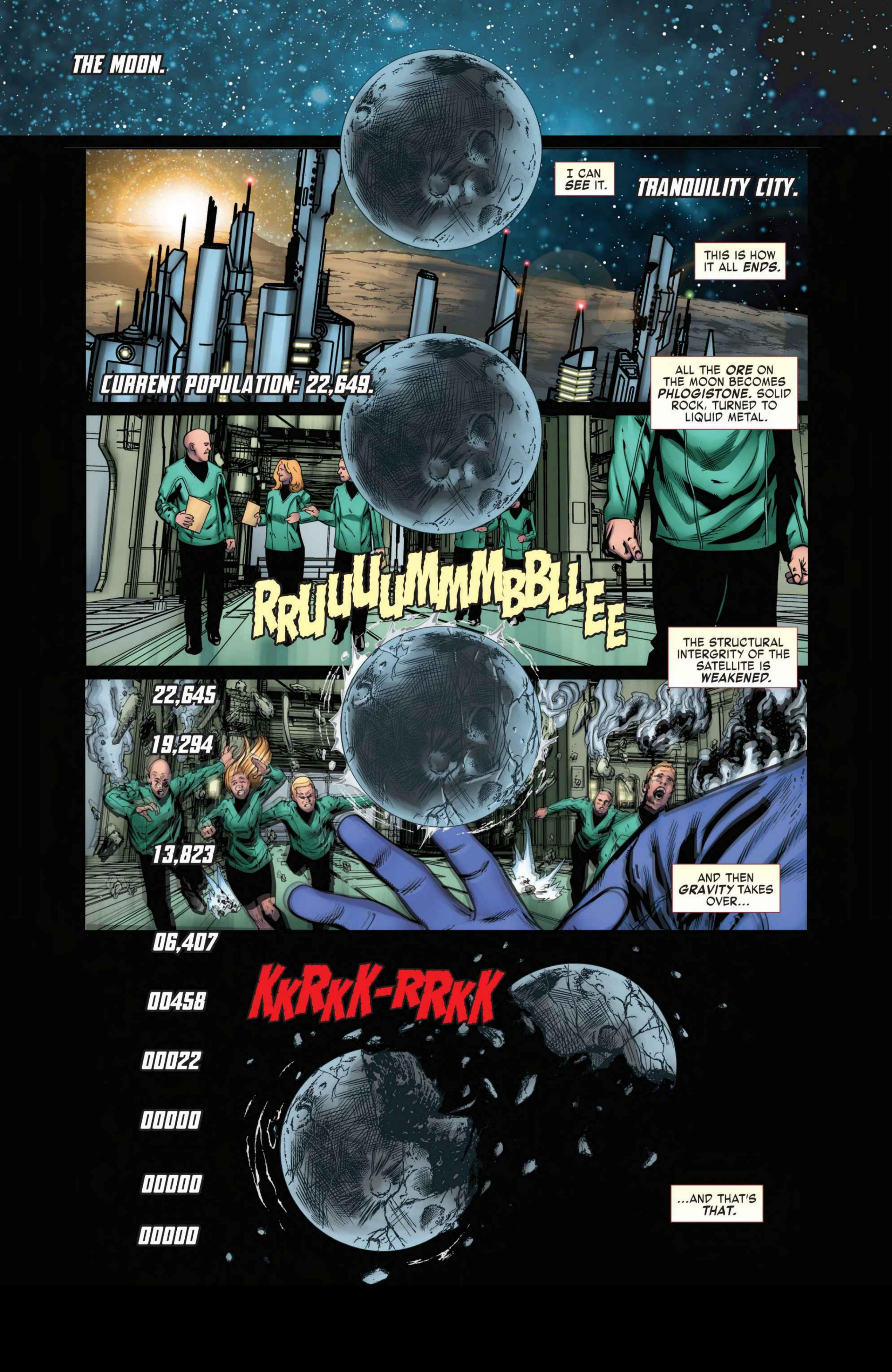

INDUSTRY!
JOBS, STARK! SO MANY JOBS!
OKAY. USING THIS DRONE AS A TASER WON'T WORK ON HIM--HE'S TOO PROTECTED.
MARTIAL ARTS ISN'T GOING TO DO ANY GOOD EITHER. NOTHING I HAVE WILL, NOT AGAINST ARMOR.
HE'S GOING TO FRY ME LIKE A STRIP OF BACON--
--UNLESS I CAN HACK HIM.
UNLESS I CAN GET INTO THIS LITTLE CREEP'S WI-FI--
PLEASE LET IT BE WI-FI IT USES--PLEASE LET IT BE EVEN VAGUELY COMPATIBLE WITH HIS TECH--
--PLEASE A HUNDRED IMPOSSIBLE THINGS THAT NEED TO HAPPEN FOR THIS TO--
--WORK.
IT WORKED. I--I'M IN.
SO ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW--
--IS GUESS A NINE-DIGIT PASSWORD. ON THE FIRST TRY.
I'M DEAD, THEN.
DON'T BE SILLY, SPORT.
PHLOGISTONE FACTORIES!
PHLOGISTONE CARS! AND PLANES! AND--AND--
--AND TV!
AND ALL YOU HAVE TO DO--
--IS DIE!
DIE!
DIE!
YOU'VE GOT THIS. THINK IT THROUGH. HE'S OBSESSED WITH YOU, ISN'T HE?
WELL, THERE YOU GO.
"TONYSTARK."
ZERO FOR THE "O," HE'S NOT A COMPLETE FOOL...
...WHY NOT.
"TONY KNOWS BEST," RIGHT?
DIE DIE DIE DIE DIE DIEEEE--
...RIGHT?
ACCESS GRANTED
BREEP

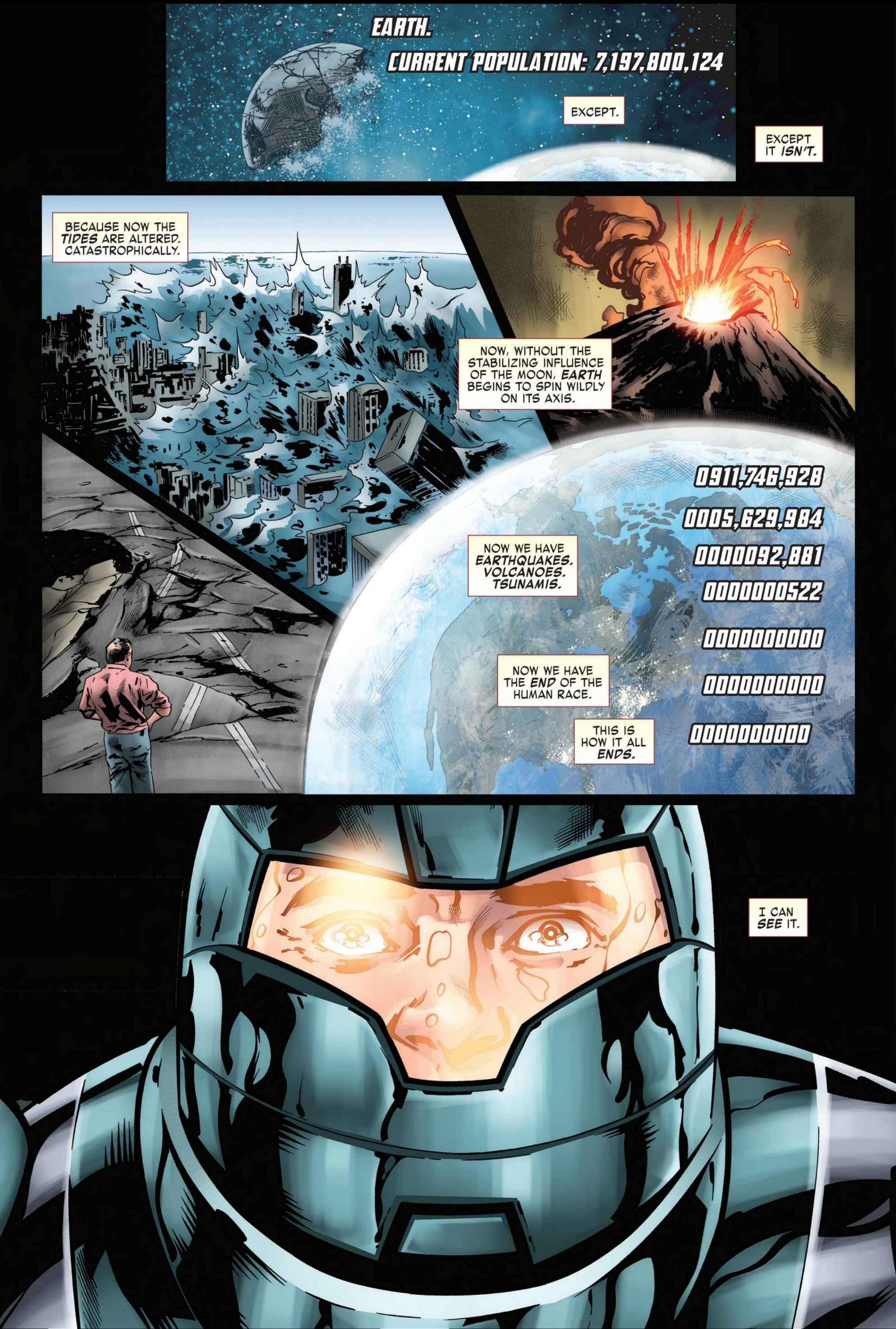

GOT YOU, STARK--
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
CHAK-CHONK
I THINK I'VE GOT YOU.
OR MORE ACCURATELY, I'VE GOT THE QUICK-RELEASE CATCHES ON YOUR ARMOR.
CLIK-CLAK
BUT... BUT MY JOB...
SORRY, TOM.
KA-THWAMM
YOU'RE FIRED.
LUCKILY, THERE'S A NEW APPLICANT READY TO FILL THE POSITION.
WILKINS MIGHT BE A DELUSIONAL MANIAC WITH A VERY SHAKY GRASP OF ECONOMIC THEORY...
...BUT HE DOES MAKE A PRETTY DECENT SUIT.
NEARLY THERE, TONY.
YOU COMING, OR...?
GO...
GO ON WITHOUT ME, SPORT.
NOT A GOOD SIGN.
STILL...IT'S BEEN A LONG ROAD...
WHIRRR

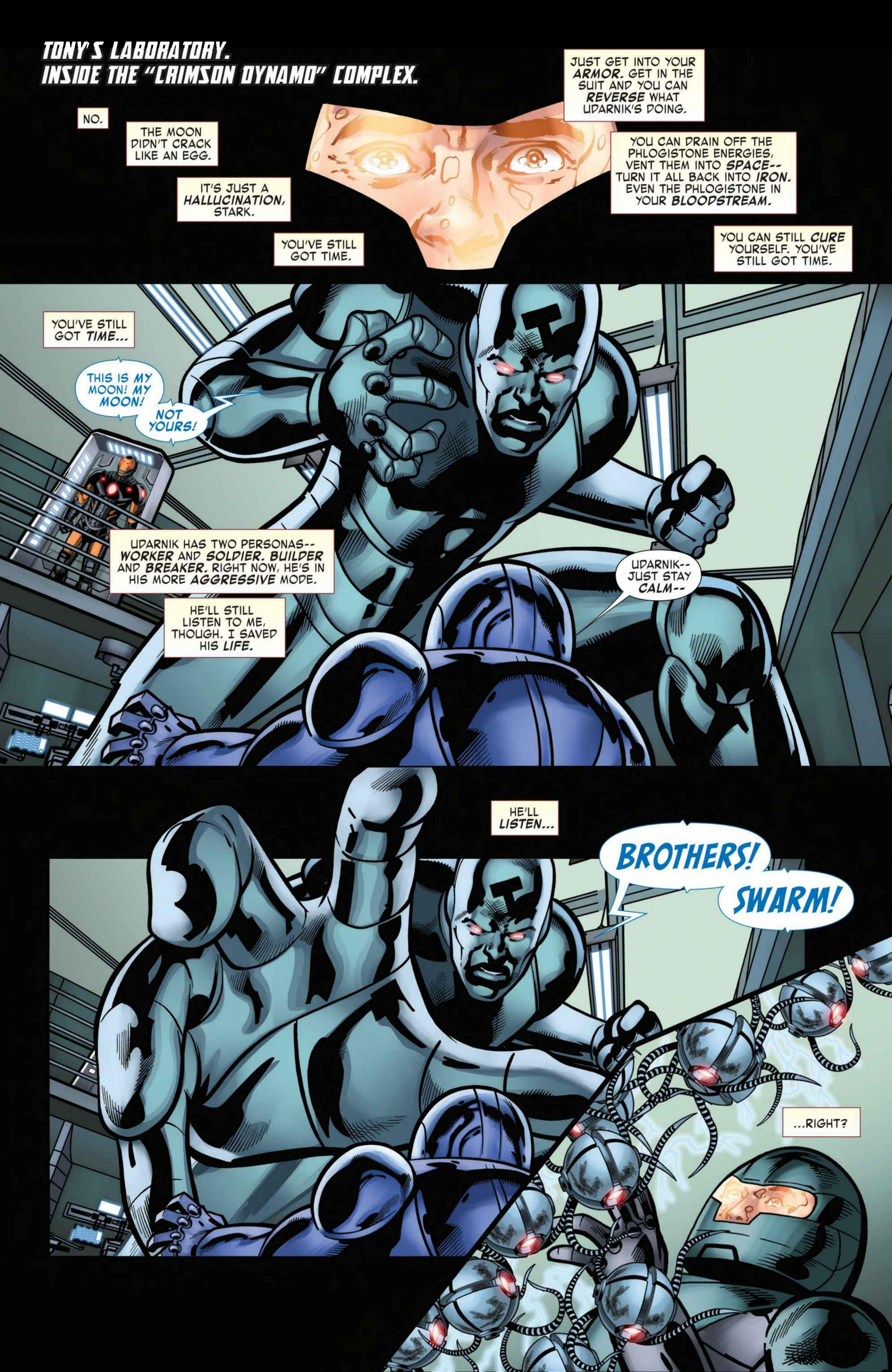

TONY'S LABORATORY IN THE "CRIMSON DYNAMO" COMPLEX.
...BUT I'M HERE NOW.
I'M HOME.
QUICK CHECK FOR ANY OF UDARNIK'S LITTLE BROTHERS HIDING IN THE RAFTERS...
...NO.
NO SIGN OF THE MAN HIMSELF, EITHER. GOOD.
ALL I NEED IS TWO MINUTES TO FIND MY ARMOR--
--HUH. ACCORDING TO THESE READOUTS, UDARNIK'S INSTALLED DOOM'S ENERGY-TRANSFER DEVICE.
WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?
AND WHAT'S THE SUIT HOOKED UP TO?
HELLO, TONY.
UDARNIK?
WHERE ARE YOU?
I'M HERE, TONY.
I'M
RIGHT
HERE.

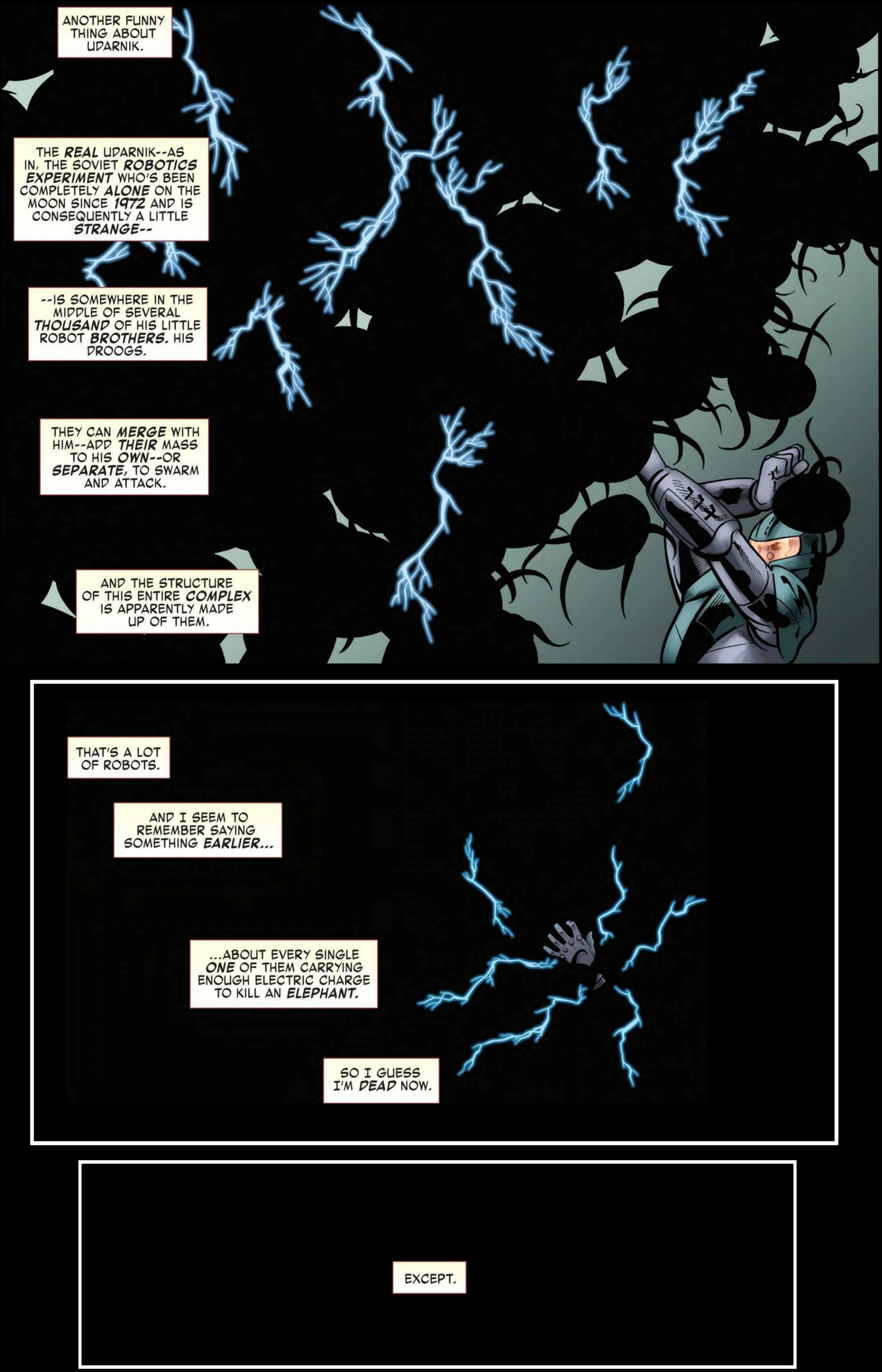

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE.
OH, WHATEVER.
I'VE HAD ENOUGH HALLUCINATIONS FOR ONE DAY. LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'RE REAL--
WHA-KRAMMMM
UNNNH--
OKAY.
HE'S REAL.
GLAD WE SORTED THAT OUT.
WHUMMP
IT'S NOT SO UNBELIEVABLE, IS IT, TONY?
ALL OF THIS. THE WHOLE COMPLEX. PROJECT: CRIMSON DYNAMO.
IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT?
IT'S ALL YOU. IT'S ALL YOUR BODY.
YOU'RE THE CRIMSON DYNAMO...
YES, TONY. FROM THE START.
THAT'S HOW LONG I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU. LISTENING TO YOU PLOT AGAINST ME. AGAINST MY BEAUTIFUL MOON.
FROM THE START.
THE TECHNOLOGY YOU'VE BEEN STEALING AND HOARDING...IT'S VERY CLEVER, TONY. VERY USEFUL.
AND YOU COULD VENT THE ENERGIES FROM PHLOGISTONE INTO SPACE. THAT WOULD WORK.
OR...
YOU COULD VENT THE PHLOGISTONE ENERGIES INTO THE OTHER ORES OF THE MOON. YOU COULD TRANSFORM THEM. MAKE THEM INTO PHLOGISTONE.
YOU COULD MAKE ENOUGH PHLOGISTONE FOR EVERYONE.

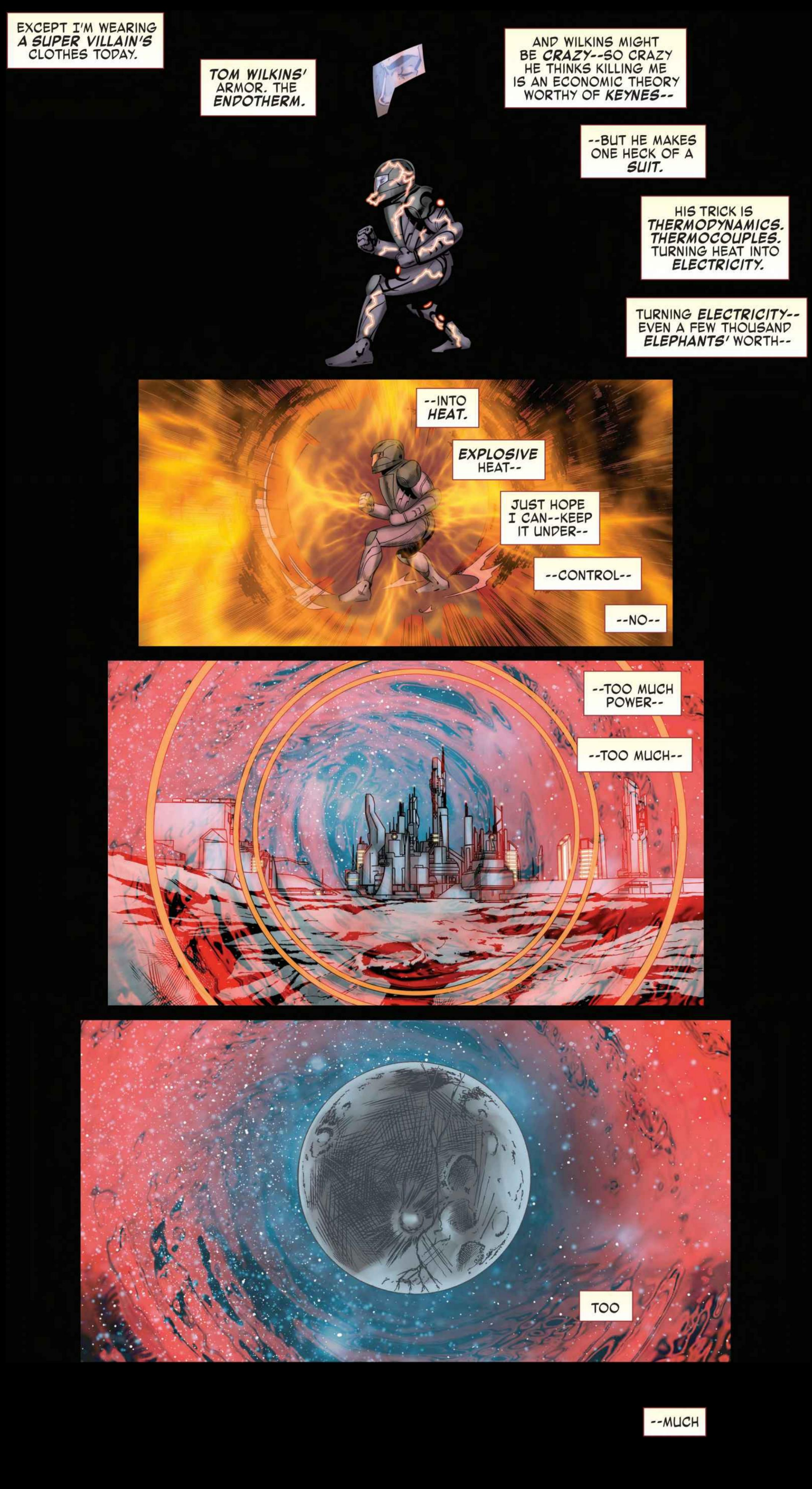

AND THEN EVERYONE WILL COME TO *STAY*, TONY.
EVERYONE WILL COME TO *STAY* AND *WORK* AND *BUILD* AND... *LIVE* HERE.
WITH *ME*.
AND I'LL NEVER BE ALONE *AGAIN*...
PHLOGISTONE IS *POISON*, UDARNIK--IT *KILLS* PEOPLE--
LIKE *URANIUM*, TONY? OR *PLUTONIUM?* OR *LEAD?*
ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE *THOSE* AWAY, TOO?
FINE, YOU WON'T *LISTEN--NONE* OF YOU IDIOTS LISTEN TO ME, THAT'S *FINE*, I DO WHAT'S RIGHT *ANYWAY*--
--BUT PHLOGISTONE'S A *LIQUID* METAL, UDARNIK. EVEN AT *ABSOLUTE ZERO.*
IF YOU REPLACE ALL THE *SOLID ORES* ON THE MOON TO *LIQUID*--WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN?
THE WEAKENED STRUCTURE WON'T STAND UP TO THE PULL OF *GRAVITY*, UDARNIK. IT'LL CRACK OPEN LIKE AN *EGG*.
YOUR MOON WILL *DIE*, UDARNIK.
AND THEN *EARTH WILL DIE TOO*--
YOU SAY.
YES! I SAY!
I *KNOW!*
UDARNIK! I'M *BEGGING* YOU, JUST *LISTEN!*
DON'T LET THIS *HAPPEN!*
I TOLD YOU, TONY. THE *TRANSFORMATION ENGINES* HAVE SUFFICIENT *ENERGY*.
IT'S *ALREADY* HAPPENING.
AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO *STOP* IT...

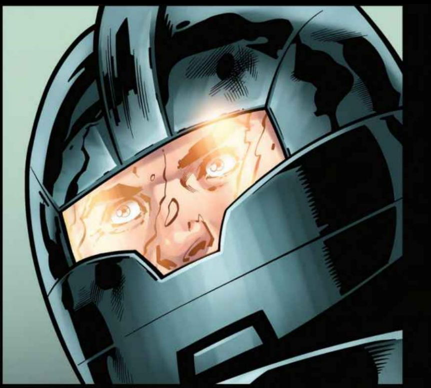

THE MOON.
I CAN SEE IT.
TRANQUILITY CITY.
THIS IS HOW IT ALL ENDS.
CURRENT POPULATION: 22,649.
ALL THE ORE ON THE MOON BECOMES PHLOGISTONE. SOLID ROCK, TURNED TO LIQUID METAL.
RRUUUUMMMMBBLLEE
THE STRUCTURAL INTERGRITY OF THE SATELLITE IS WEAKENED.
22,645
19,294
13,823
AND THEN GRAVITY TAKES OVER...
06,407
00458
KKRKK-RRKK
00022
00000
00000
00000
...AND THAT'S THAT.

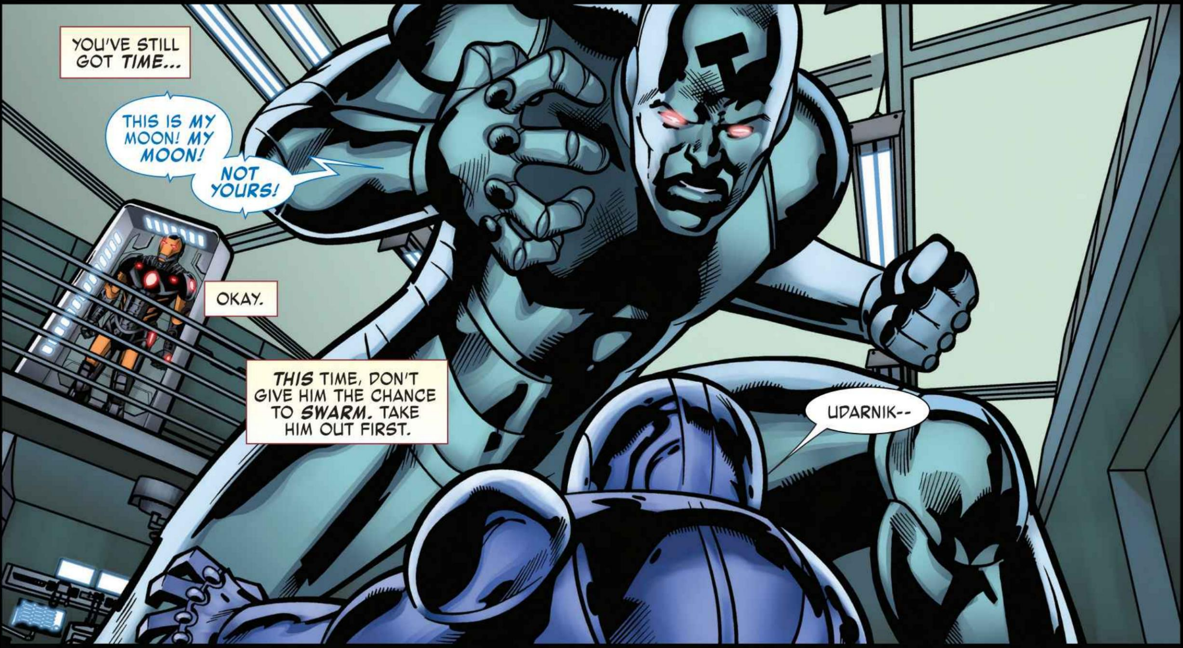

EARTH.
CURRENT POPULATION: 7,197,800,124
EXCEPT.
EXCEPT IT *ISN'T.*
BECAUSE NOW THE *TIDES* ARE ALTERED. CATASTROPHICALLY.
NOW, WITHOUT THE STABILIZING INFLUENCE OF THE MOON, *EARTH* BEGINS TO SPIN WILDLY ON ITS AXIS.
0911,746,928
0005,629,984
0000092,881
0000000522
NOW WE HAVE *EARTHQUAKES. VOLCANOES. TSUNAMIS.*
0000000000
NOW WE HAVE THE *END* OF THE HUMAN RACE.
0000000000
THIS IS HOW IT ALL *ENDS.*
0000000000
I CAN *SEE* IT.

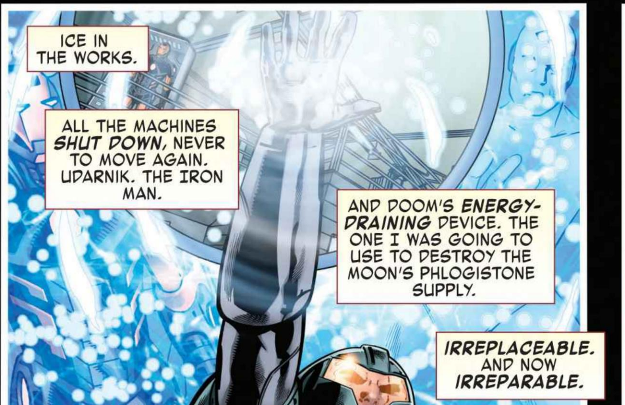

TONY'S LABORATORY.
INSIDE THE "CRIMSON DYNAMO" COMPLEX.
NO.
THE MOON DIDN'T CRACK LIKE AN EGG.
IT'S JUST A HALLUCINATION, STARK.
YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME.
JUST GET INTO YOUR ARMOR. GET IN THE SUIT AND YOU CAN REVERSE WHAT UDARNIK'S DOING.
YOU CAN DRAIN OFF THE PHLOGISTONE ENERGIES, VENT THEM INTO SPACE-- TURN IT ALL BACK INTO IRON. EVEN THE PHLOGISTONE IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM.
YOU CAN STILL CURE YOURSELF. YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME.
YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME...
THIS IS MY MOON! MY MOON!
NOT YOURS!
UDARNIK HAS TWO PERSONAS-- WORKER AND SOLDIER. BUILDER AND BREAKER. RIGHT NOW, HE'S IN HIS MORE AGGRESSIVE MODE.
HE'LL STILL LISTEN TO ME, THOUGH. I SAVED HIS LIFE.
UDARNIK-- JUST STAY CALM--
HE'LL LISTEN...
BROTHERS!
SWARM!
...RIGHT?

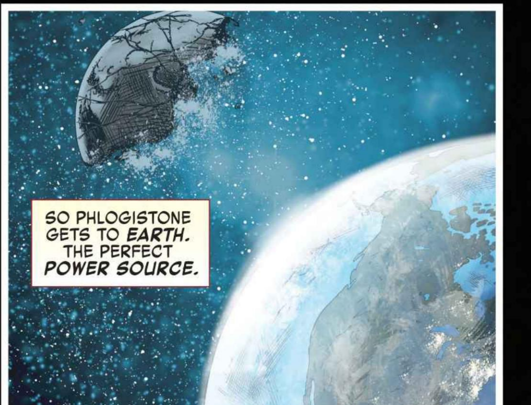

ANOTHER FUNNY THING ABOUT UDARNIK.
THE REAL UDARNIK--AS IN, THE SOVIET ROBOTICS EXPERIMENT WHO'S BEEN COMPLETELY ALONE ON THE MOON SINCE 1972 AND IS CONSEQUENTLY A LITTLE STRANGE--
--IS SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDDLE OF SEVERAL THOUSAND OF HIS LITTLE ROBOT BROTHERS. HIS DROOGS.
THEY CAN MERGE WITH HIM--ADD THEIR MASS TO HIS OWN--OR SEPARATE, TO SWARM AND ATTACK.
AND THE STRUCTURE OF THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX IS APPARENTLY MADE UP OF THEM.
THAT'S A LOT OF ROBOTS.
AND I SEEM TO REMEMBER SAYING SOMETHING EARLIER...
...ABOUT EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM CARRYING ENOUGH ELECTRIC CHARGE TO KILL AN ELEPHANT.
SO I GUESS I'M DEAD NOW.
EXCEPT.


EXCEPT I'M WEARING *A SUPER VILLAIN'S* CLOTHES TODAY.
TOM WILKINS' ARMOR. THE *ENDOTHERM.*
AND WILKINS MIGHT BE *CRAZY*--SO CRAZY HE THINKS KILLING ME IS AN ECONOMIC THEORY WORTHY OF *KEYNES--*
--BUT HE MAKES ONE HECK OF A *SUIT.*
HIS TRICK IS *THERMODYNAMICS. THERMOCOUPLES.* TURNING HEAT INTO *ELECTRICITY.*
TURNING *ELECTRICITY--* EVEN A FEW THOUSAND *ELEPHANTS'* WORTH--
--INTO *HEAT.*
EXPLOSIVE HEAT--
JUST HOPE I CAN--KEEP IT UNDER--
--CONTROL--
--NO--
--TOO MUCH POWER--
--TOO MUCH--
TOO
--MUCH

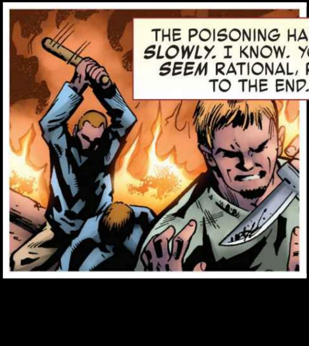

NO.
YOU DIDN'T BLOW UP THE MOON.
IT'S JUST A *HALLUCINATION,* STARK.

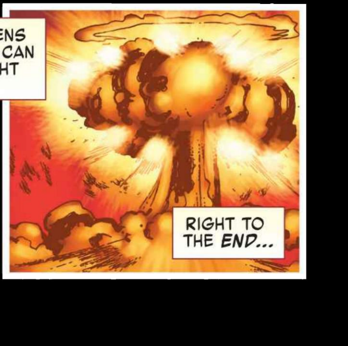

YOU'VE STILL GOT *TIME...*
THIS IS MY MOON! MY MOON!
NOT YOURS!
OKAY.
THIS TIME, DON'T GIVE HIM THE CHANCE TO *SWARM.* TAKE HIM OUT FIRST.
UDARNIK--

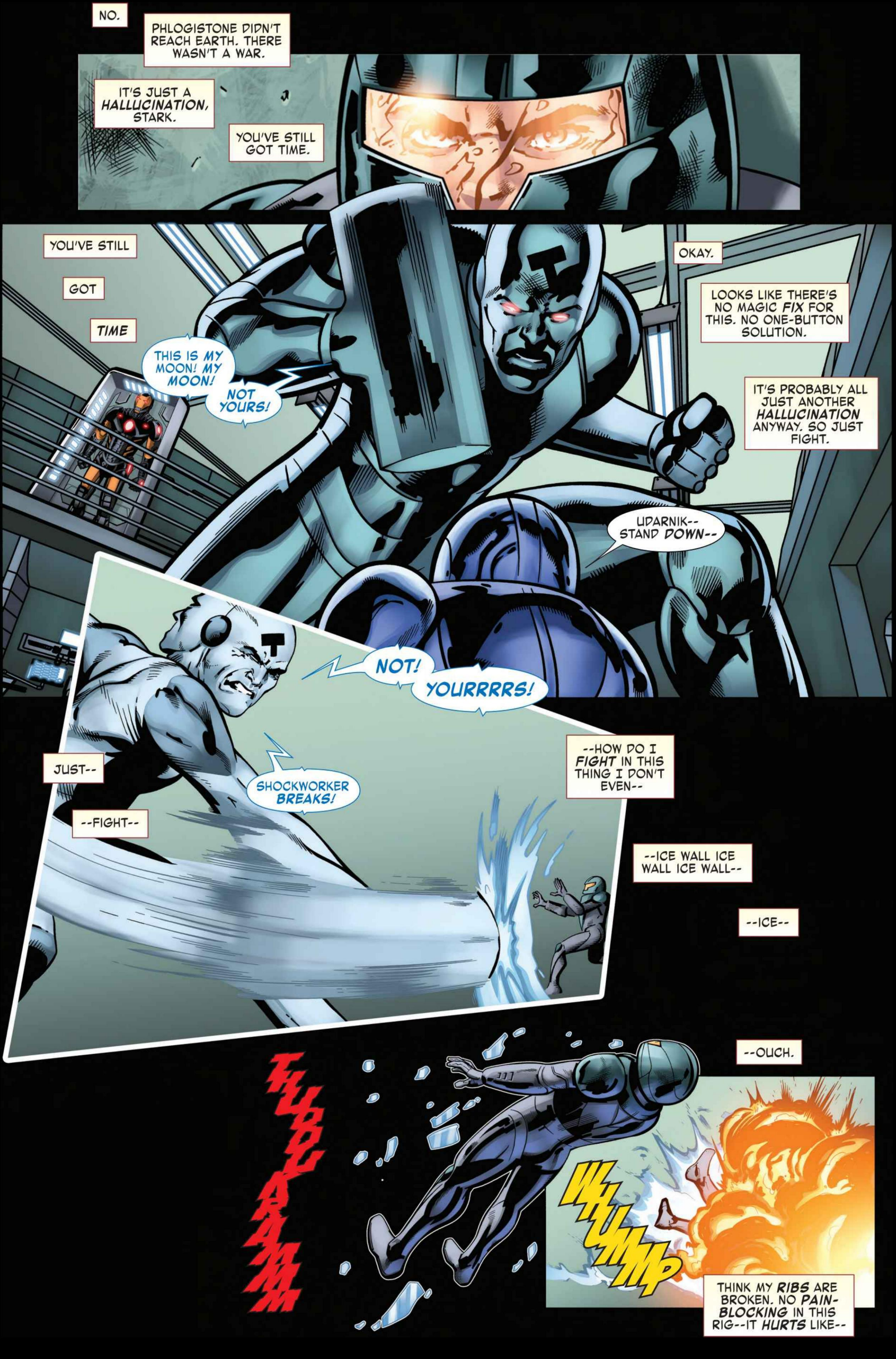

ICE IN THE WORKS.
ALL THE MACHINES *SHUT DOWN,* NEVER TO MOVE AGAIN. UDARNIK. THE IRON MAN.
AND DOOM'S *ENERGY-DRAINING* DEVICE. THE ONE I WAS GOING TO USE TO DESTROY THE MOON'S PHLOGISTONE SUPPLY.
IRREPLACEABLE. AND NOW *IRREPARABLE.*

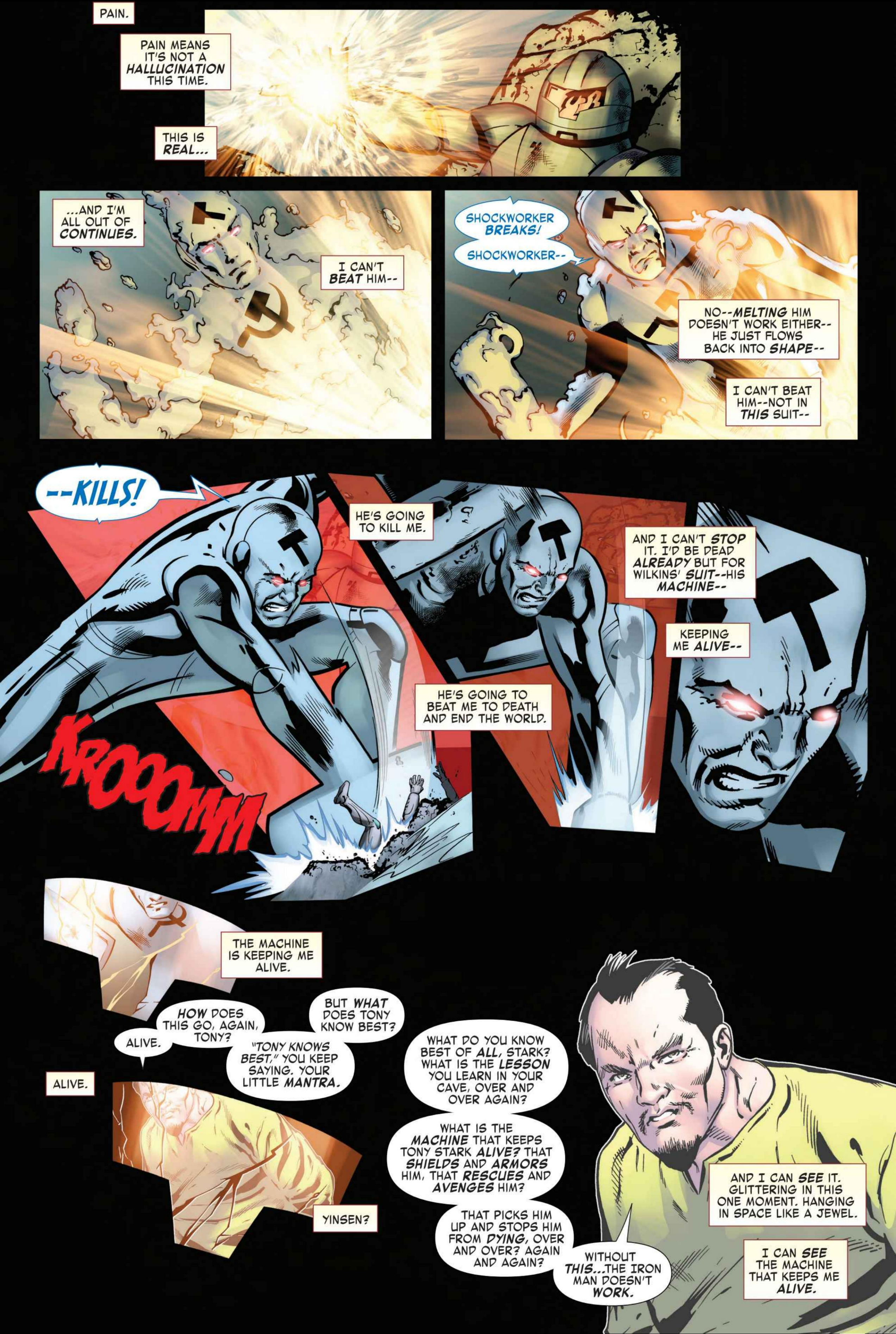

SO PHLOGISTONE GETS TO *EARTH.* THE PERFECT *POWER SOURCE.*

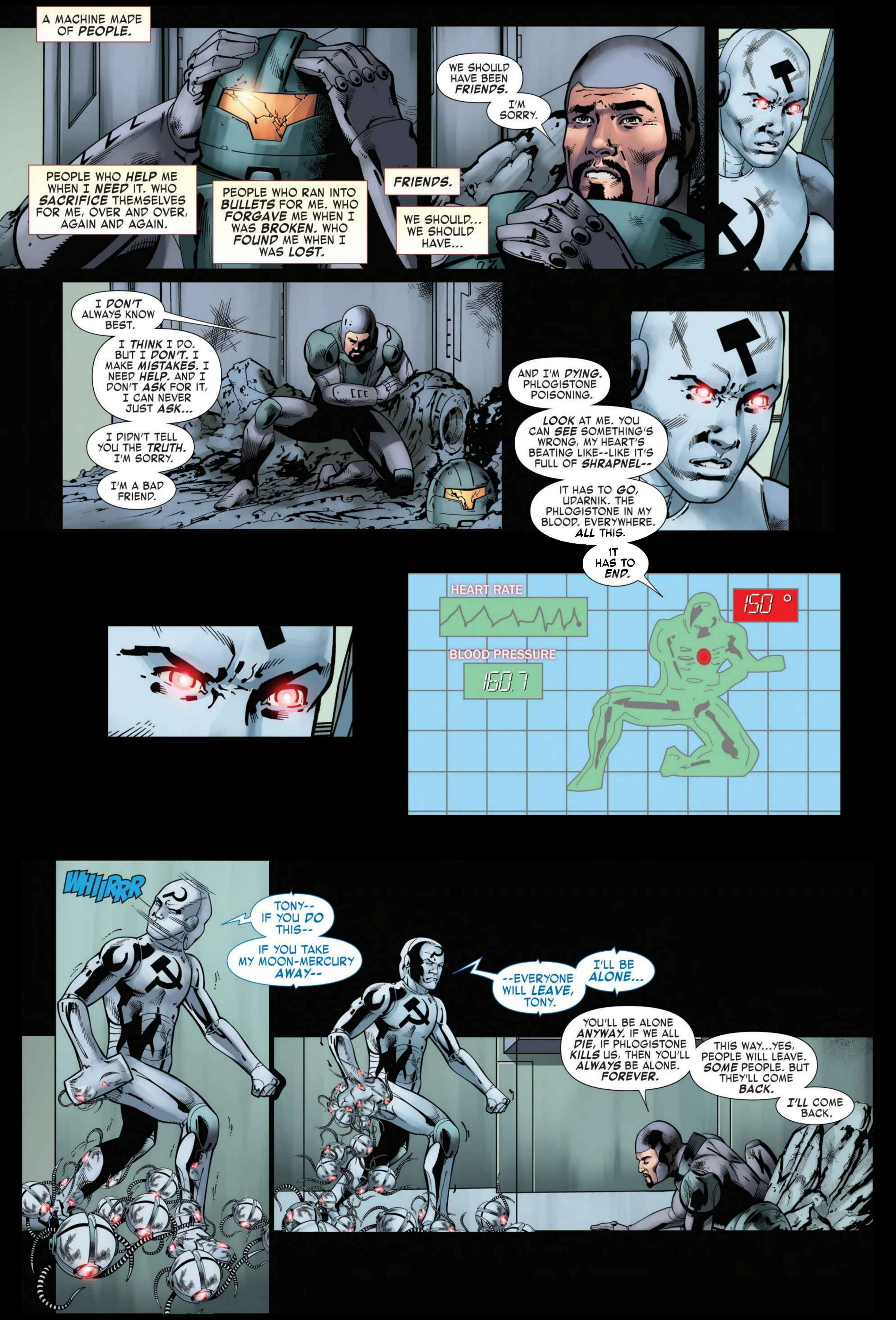
A PHLOGISTONE BATTERY IN EVERY *PHONE.* EVERY *CAR.* EVERY *TOOTHBRUSH.* EVERY HOSPITAL. EVERY *SCHOOL.*
PHLOGISTONE IN THE *WATER.* IN THE *AIR.*

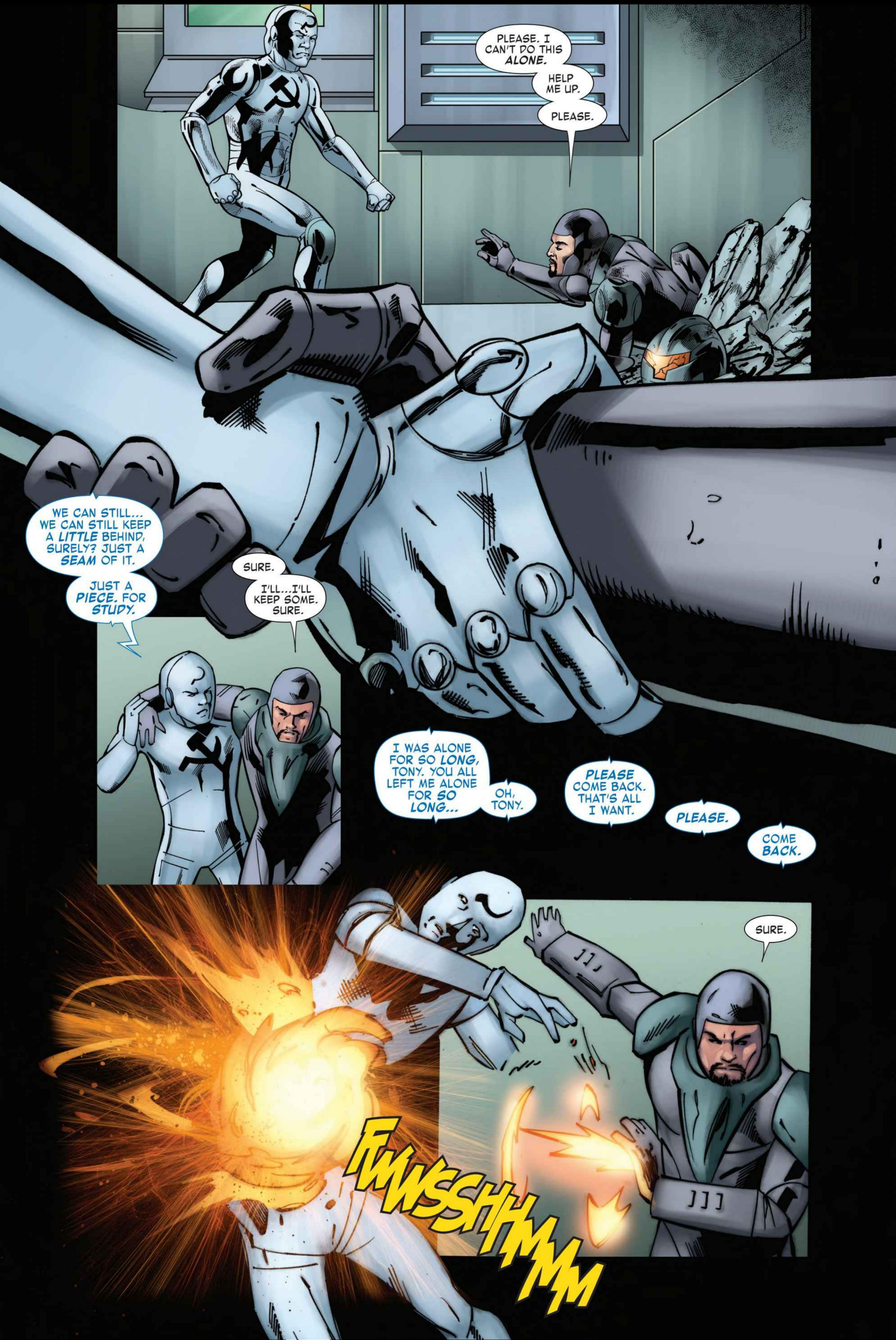

THE POISONING HAPPENS *SLOWLY.* I KNOW. YOU CAN *SEEM* RATIONAL, RIGHT TO THE END.

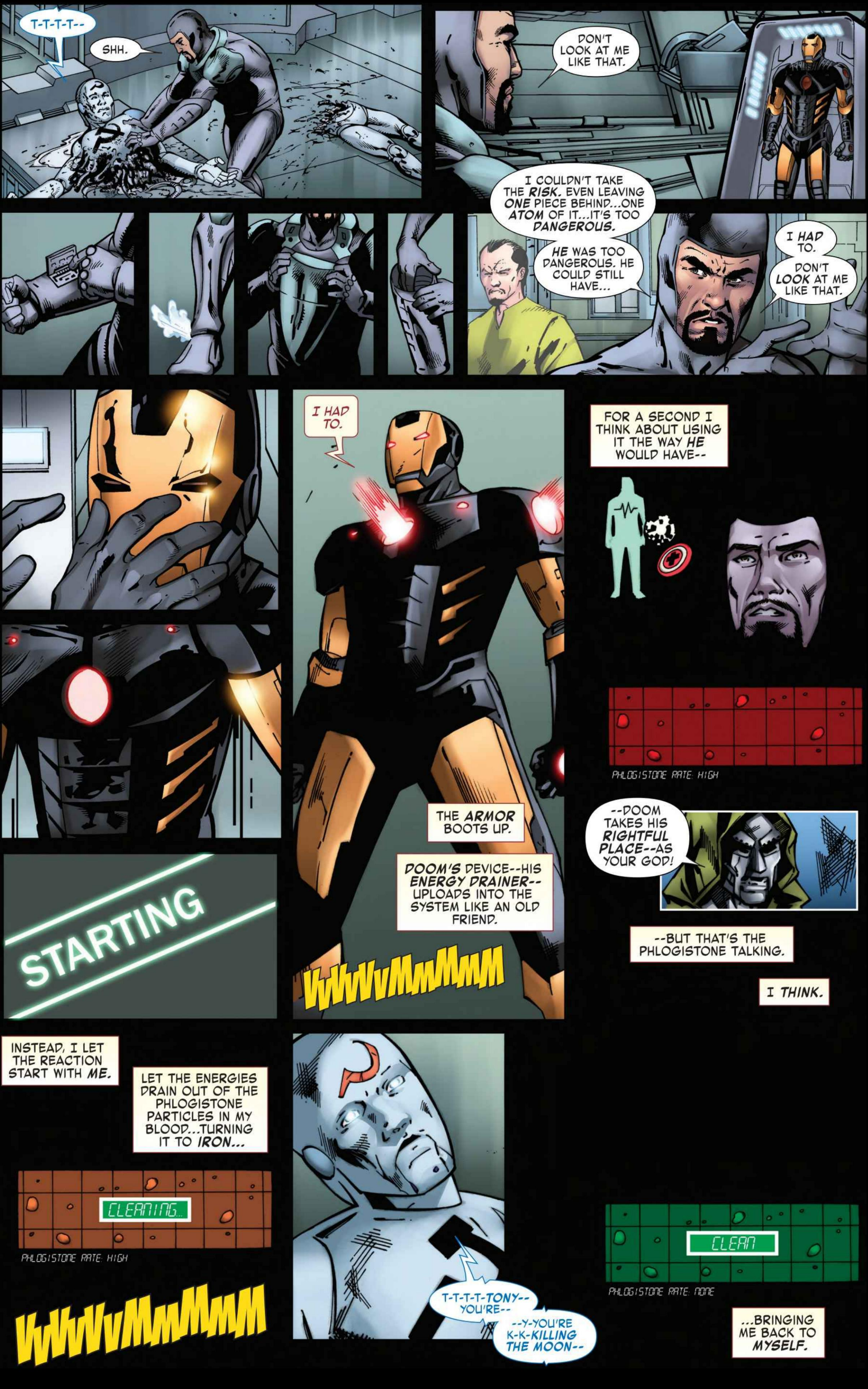

RIGHT TO THE *END...*

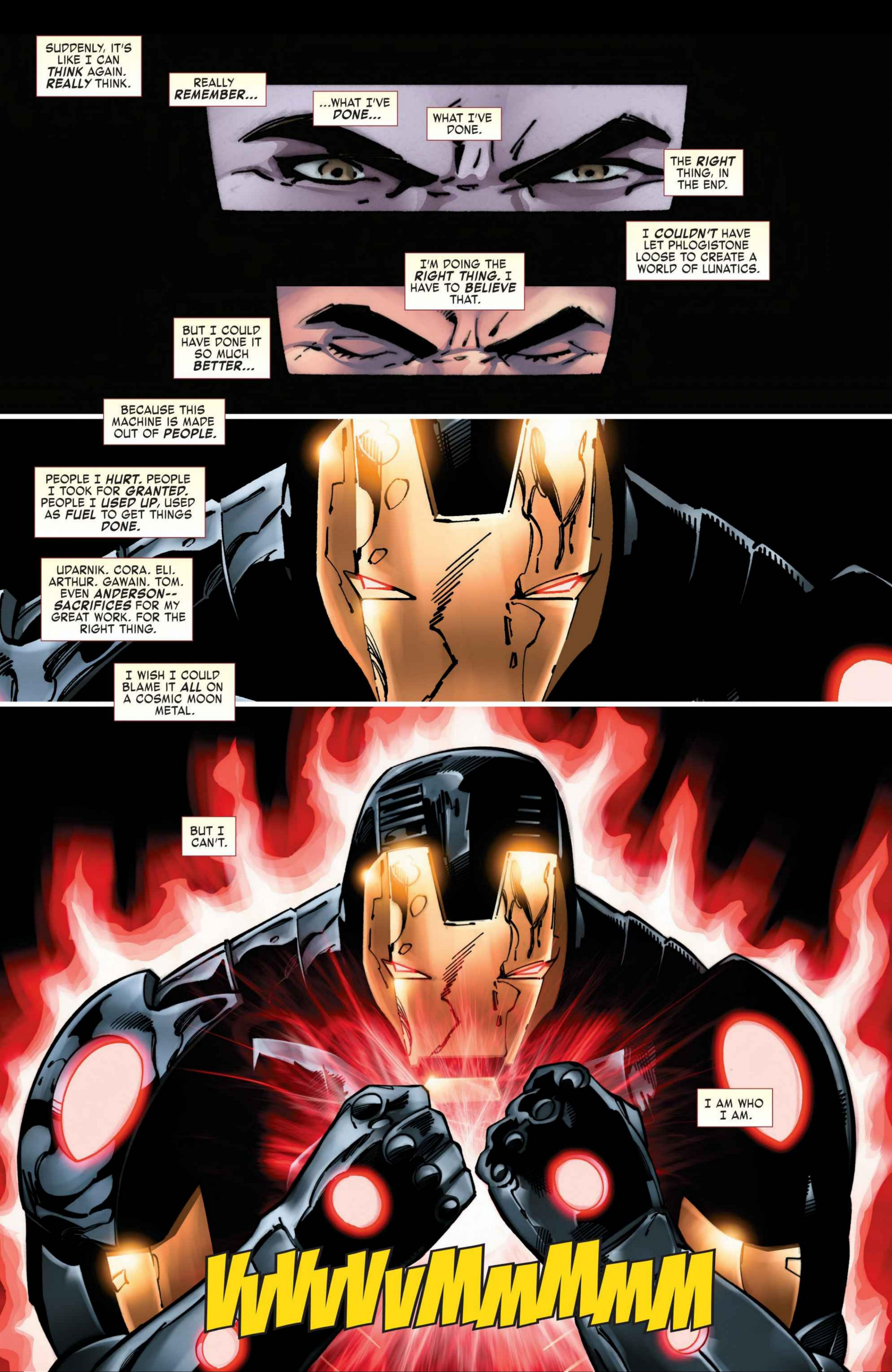

NO.
PHLOGISTONE DIDN'T REACH EARTH. THERE WASN'T A WAR.
IT'S JUST A *HALLUCINATION*, STARK.
YOU'VE STILL GOT TIME.
YOU'VE STILL
GOT
TIME
THIS IS *MY* MOON! *MY MOON!*
NOT YOURS!
OKAY.
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NO MAGIC *FIX* FOR THIS. NO ONE-BUTTON SOLUTION.
IT'S PROBABLY ALL JUST ANOTHER *HALLUCINATION* ANYWAY. SO JUST FIGHT.
UDARNIK-- STAND *DOWN*--
NOT!
YOURRRRS!
JUST--
SHOCKWORKER *BREAKS!*
--FIGHT--
--HOW DO I *FIGHT* IN THIS THING I DON'T EVEN--
--ICE WALL ICE WALL ICE WALL--
--ICE--
KRUDARAM
--OUCH.
WHUMP
THINK MY *RIBS* ARE BROKEN. NO *PAIN-BLOCKING* IN THIS RIG--IT *HURTS* LIKE--

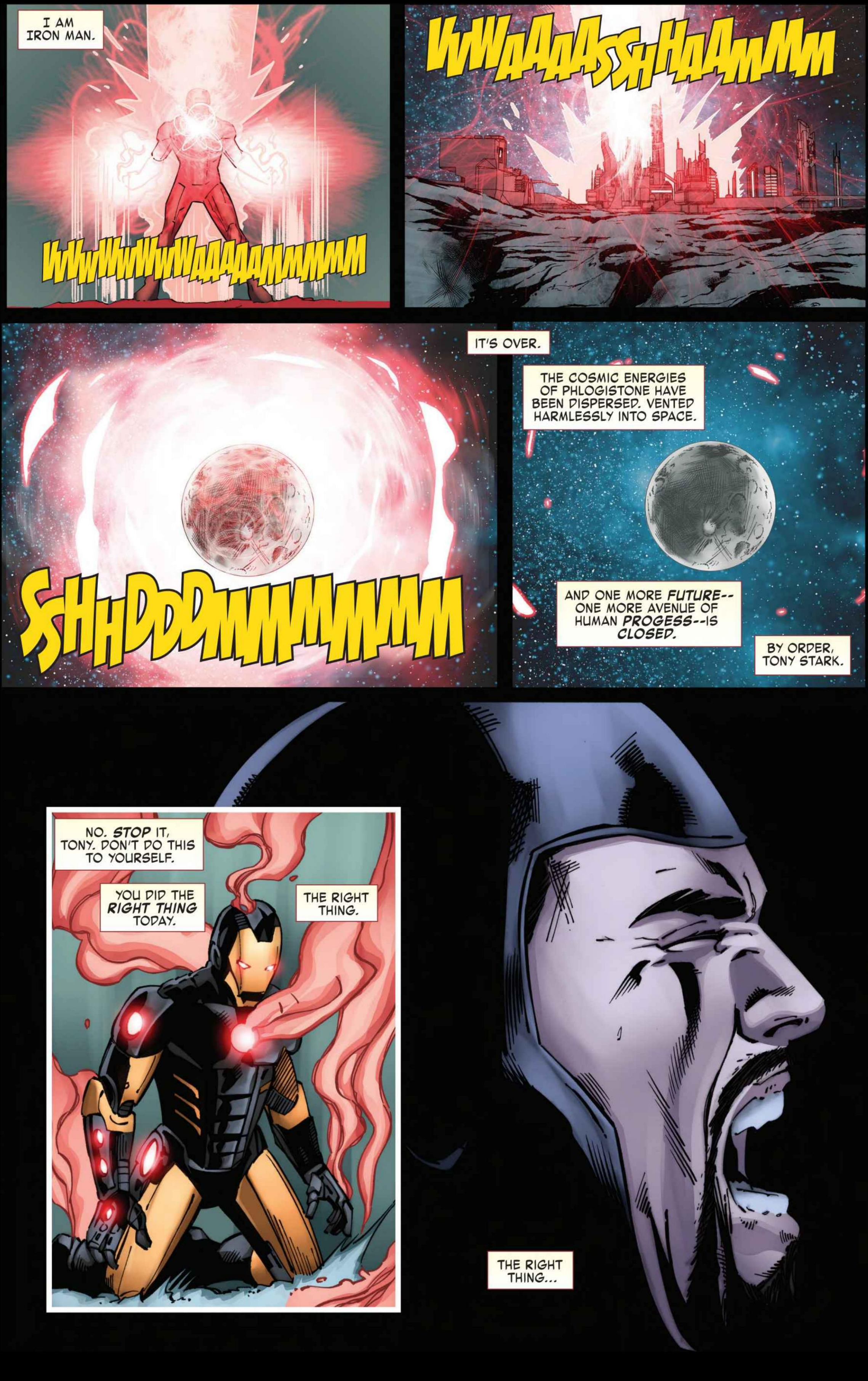

PAIN.
PAIN MEANS IT'S NOT A *HALLUCINATION* THIS TIME.
THIS IS *REAL...*
...AND I'M ALL OUT OF *CONTINUES.*
I CAN'T *BEAT* HIM--
SHOCKWORKER *BREAKS!*
SHOCKWORKER--
NO--*MELTING* HIM DOESN'T WORK EITHER--HE JUST FLOWS BACK INTO *SHAPE*--
I CAN'T BEAT HIM--NOT IN *THIS* SUIT--
--KILLS!
HE'S GOING TO KILL ME.
KROOOMM
HE'S GOING TO BEAT ME TO DEATH AND END THE WORLD.
AND I CAN'T *STOP* IT. I'D BE DEAD *ALREADY* BUT FOR WILKINS' *SUIT*--HIS *MACHINE*--
KEEPING ME *ALIVE*--
THE MACHINE IS KEEPING ME ALIVE.
ALIVE.
HOW DOES THIS GO, AGAIN, TONY?
"*TONY KNOWS BEST,*" YOU KEEP SAYING. YOUR LITTLE *MANTRA.*
BUT *WHAT* DOES TONY KNOW BEST?
ALIVE.
WHAT DO YOU KNOW BEST OF *ALL*, STARK? WHAT IS THE *LESSON* YOU LEARN IN YOUR CAVE, OVER AND OVER AGAIN?
WHAT IS THE *MACHINE* THAT KEEPS TONY STARK *ALIVE?* THAT *SHIELDS* AND *ARMORS* HIM, THAT *RESCUES* AND *AVENGES* HIM?
THAT PICKS HIM UP AND STOPS HIM FROM *DYING*, OVER AND OVER? AGAIN AND AGAIN?
YINSEN?
WITHOUT *THIS...*THE IRON MAN DOESN'T *WORK.*
AND I CAN *SEE* IT. GLITTERING IN THIS ONE MOMENT. HANGING IN SPACE LIKE A JEWEL.
I CAN *SEE* THE MACHINE THAT KEEPS ME *ALIVE.*

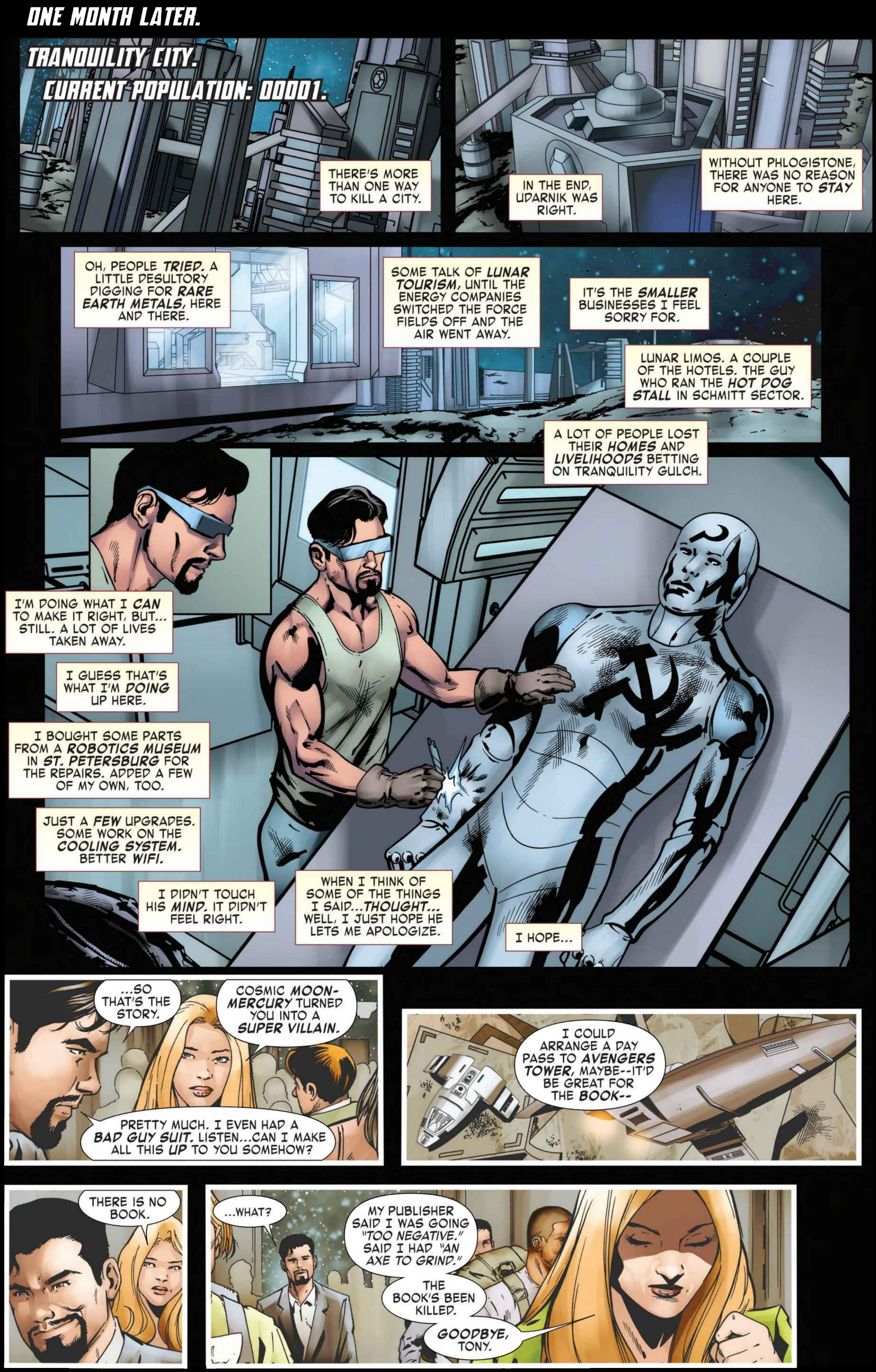

A MACHINE MADE OF PEOPLE.
PEOPLE WHO HELP ME WHEN I NEED IT. WHO SACRIFICE THEMSELVES FOR ME, OVER AND OVER, AGAIN AND AGAIN.
PEOPLE WHO RAN INTO BULLETS FOR ME. WHO FORGAVE ME WHEN I WAS BROKEN. WHO FOUND ME WHEN I WAS LOST.
WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN FRIENDS.
I'M SORRY.
FRIENDS.
WE SHOULD... WE SHOULD HAVE...
I DON'T ALWAYS KNOW BEST.
I THINK I DO. BUT I DON'T. I MAKE MISTAKES. I NEED HELP. AND I DON'T ASK FOR IT, I CAN NEVER JUST ASK...
I DIDN'T TELL YOU THE TRUTH. I'M SORRY.
I'M A BAD FRIEND.
AND I'M DYING. PHLOGISTONE POISONING.
LOOK AT ME. YOU CAN SEE SOMETHING'S WRONG, MY HEART'S BEATING LIKE--LIKE IT'S FULL OF SHRAPNEL--
IT HAS TO GO, UDARNIK. THE PHLOGISTONE IN MY BLOOD. EVERYWHERE. ALL THIS.
IT HAS TO END.
HEART RATE
150 °
BLOOD PRESSURE
160.7
WHIIRRR
TONY-- IF YOU DO THIS--
IF YOU TAKE MY MOON-MERCURY AWAY--
--EVERYONE WILL LEAVE, TONY.
I'LL BE ALONE...
YOU'LL BE ALONE ANYWAY. IF WE ALL DIE, IF PHLOGISTONE KILLS US, THEN YOU'LL ALWAYS BE ALONE. FOREVER.
THIS WAY...YES, PEOPLE WILL LEAVE. SOME PEOPLE. BUT THEY'LL COME BACK.
I'LL COME BACK.

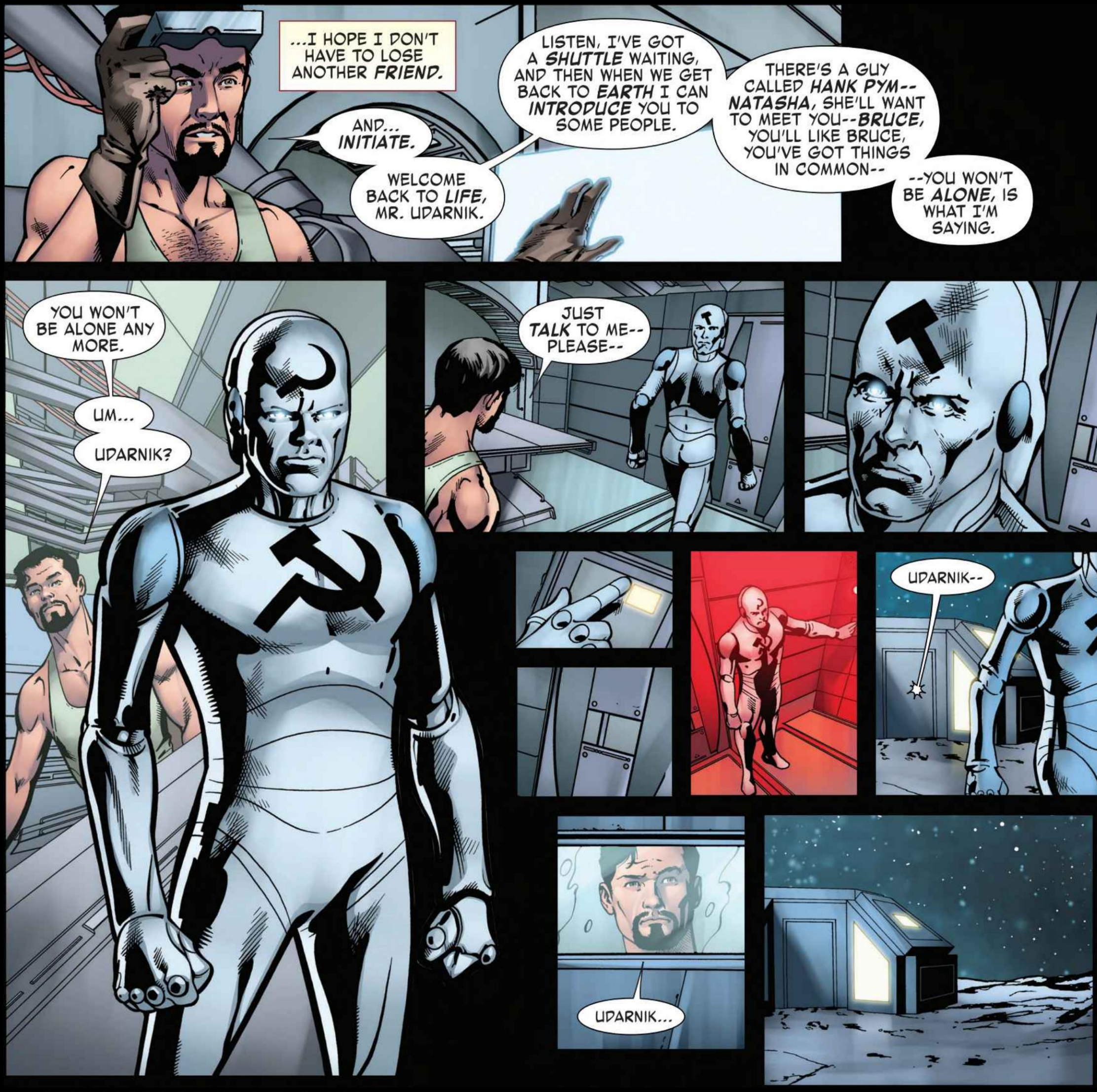

PLEASE. I CAN'T DO THIS *ALONE.*
HELP ME UP.
PLEASE.
WE CAN STILL... WE CAN STILL KEEP A *LITTLE* BEHIND, SURELY? JUST A *SEAM* OF IT.
JUST A *PIECE.* FOR *STUDY.*
SURE.
I'LL...I'LL KEEP SOME. SURE.
I WAS ALONE FOR SO *LONG,* TONY. YOU ALL LEFT ME ALONE FOR *SO LONG...*
OH, TONY.
PLEASE COME BACK. THAT'S ALL I WANT.
PLEASE.
COME *BACK.*
SURE.
FWWSSHHMMMM


T-T-T-T--
SHH.
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT.
I COULDN'T TAKE THE *RISK.* EVEN LEAVING *ONE* PIECE BEHIND...ONE *ATOM* OF IT...IT'S TOO *DANGEROUS.*
HE WAS TOO DANGEROUS. HE COULD STILL HAVE...
I *HAD* TO.
DON'T *LOOK* AT ME LIKE THAT.
I HAD TO.
FOR A SECOND I THINK ABOUT USING IT THE WAY *HE* WOULD HAVE--
PHLOGISTONE RATE: HIGH
--DOOM TAKES HIS *RIGHTFUL PLACE*--AS YOUR GOD!
--BUT THAT'S THE PHLOGISTONE TALKING.
I *THINK.*
THE *ARMOR* BOOTS UP.
DOOM'S DEVICE--HIS *ENERGY DRAINER*--UPLOADS INTO THE SYSTEM LIKE AN OLD FRIEND.
STARTING
VVVVVVMMMMMM
INSTEAD, I LET THE REACTION START WITH *ME.*
LET THE ENERGIES DRAIN OUT OF THE PHLOGISTONE PARTICLES IN MY BLOOD...TURNING IT TO *IRON...*
CLEANING...
PHLOGISTONE RATE: HIGH
VVVVVVMMMMMM
T-T-T-T-*TONY*-- YOU'RE--
--Y-YOU'RE K-K-*KILLING THE MOON*--
CLEAN
PHLOGISTONE RATE: NONE
...BRINGING ME BACK TO *MYSELF.*

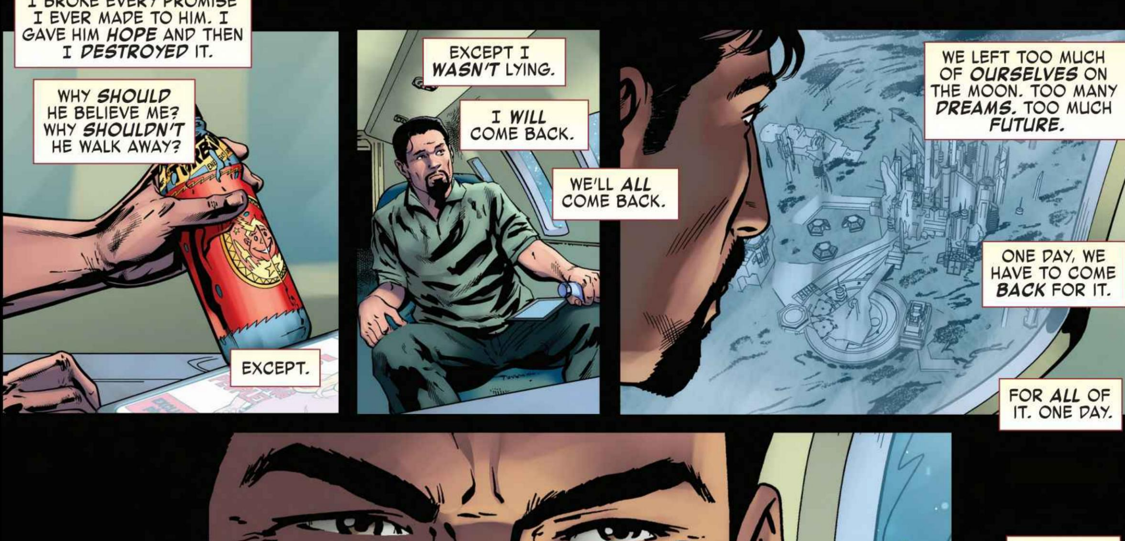

SUDDENLY, IT'S LIKE I CAN *THINK* AGAIN. *REALLY* THINK.
REALLY *REMEMBER...*
...WHAT I'VE *DONE...*
WHAT I'VE DONE.
THE *RIGHT* THING, IN THE END.
I *COULDN'T* HAVE LET PHLOGISTONE LOOSE TO CREATE A WORLD OF LUNATICS.
I'M DOING THE *RIGHT THING.* I HAVE TO *BELIEVE* THAT.
BUT I COULD HAVE DONE IT SO MUCH *BETTER...*
BECAUSE THIS MACHINE IS MADE OUT OF *PEOPLE.*
PEOPLE I *HURT.* PEOPLE I TOOK FOR *GRANTED.* PEOPLE I *USED UP,* USED AS *FUEL* TO GET THINGS *DONE.*
UDARNIK. CORA. ELI. ARTHUR. GAWAIN. TOM. EVEN *ANDERSON--* *SACRIFICES* FOR MY GREAT WORK. FOR THE RIGHT THING.
I WISH I COULD BLAME IT *ALL* ON A COSMIC MOON METAL.
BUT I CAN'T.
I AM WHO I AM.
VVVVVvMMMMMM

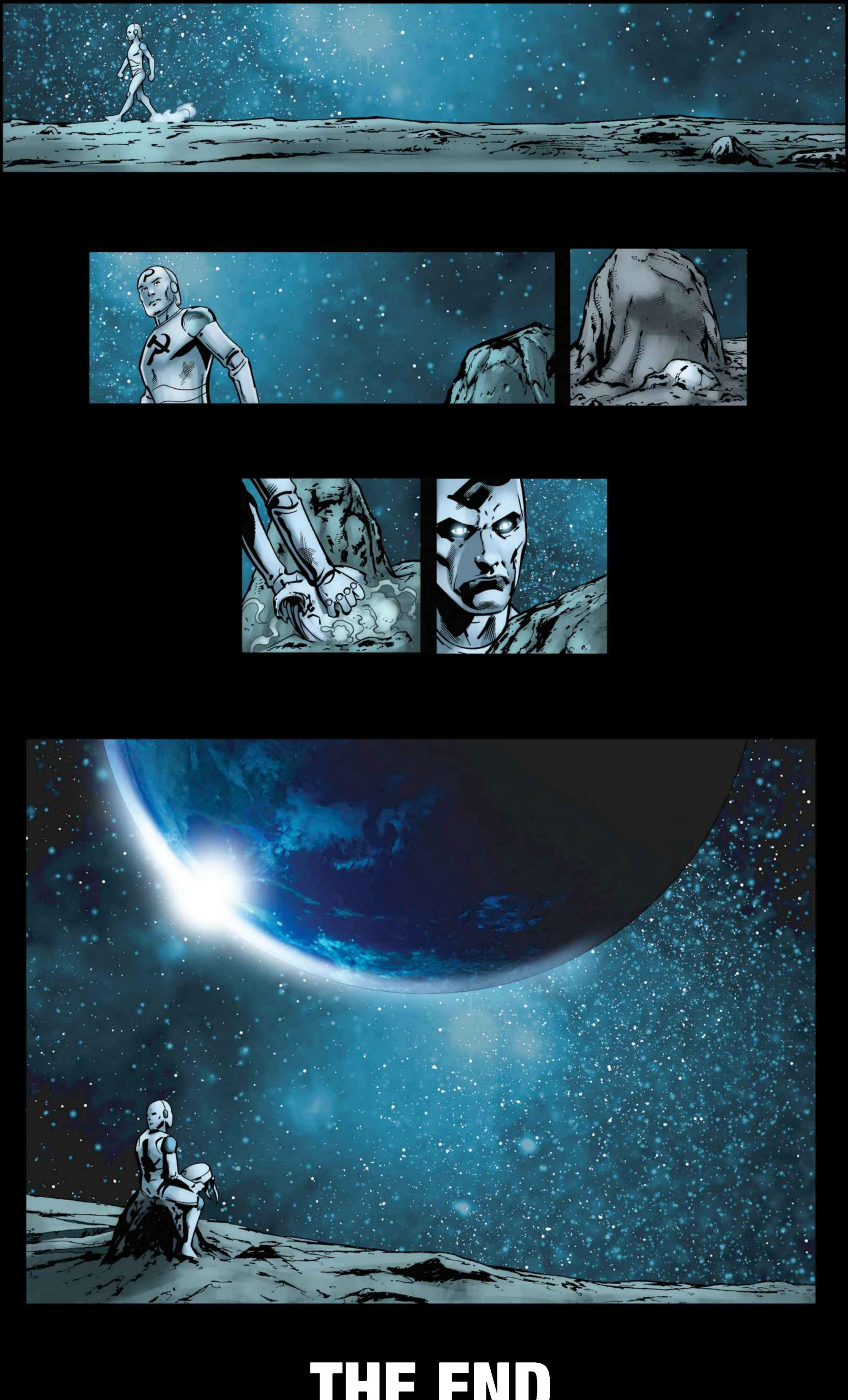

I AM IRON MAN.
WWWWWWWWWWAAAAAMMMMM
WWAAAASSHHAAMMM
IT'S OVER.
SHHDDMMMMMMMM
THE COSMIC ENERGIES OF PHLOGISTONE HAVE BEEN DISPERSED. VENTED HARMLESSLY INTO SPACE.
AND ONE MORE FUTURE-- ONE MORE AVENUE OF HUMAN PROGESS--IS CLOSED.
BY ORDER, TONY STARK.
NO. STOP IT, TONY. DON'T DO THIS TO YOURSELF.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING TODAY.
THE RIGHT THING.
THE RIGHT THING...


ONE MONTH LATER.
TRANQUILITY CITY. CURRENT POPULATION: 00001.
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO KILL A CITY.
IN THE END, UDARNIK WAS RIGHT.
WITHOUT PHLOGISTONE, THERE WAS NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO STAY HERE.
OH, PEOPLE TRIED. A LITTLE DESULTORY DIGGING FOR RARE EARTH METALS, HERE AND THERE.
SOME TALK OF LUNAR TOURISM, UNTIL THE ENERGY COMPANIES SWITCHED THE FORCE FIELDS OFF AND THE AIR WENT AWAY.
IT'S THE SMALLER BUSINESSES I FEEL SORRY FOR.
LUNAR LIMOS. A COUPLE OF THE HOTELS. THE GUY WHO RAN THE HOT DOG STALL IN SCHMITT SECTOR.
A LOT OF PEOPLE LOST THEIR HOMES AND LIVELIHOODS BETTING ON TRANQUILITY GULCH.
I'M DOING WHAT I CAN TO MAKE IT RIGHT, BUT... STILL. A LOT OF LIVES TAKEN AWAY.
I GUESS THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING UP HERE.
I BOUGHT SOME PARTS FROM A ROBOTICS MUSEUM IN ST. PETERSBURG FOR THE REPAIRS. ADDED A FEW OF MY OWN, TOO.
JUST A FEW UPGRADES. SOME WORK ON THE COOLING SYSTEM. BETTER WIFI.
I DIDN'T TOUCH HIS MIND. IT DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT.
WHEN I THINK OF SOME OF THE THINGS I SAID...THOUGHT... WELL, I JUST HOPE HE LETS ME APOLOGIZE.
I HOPE...
...SO THAT'S THE STORY.
COSMIC MOON-MERCURY TURNED YOU INTO A SUPER VILLAIN.
PRETTY MUCH. I EVEN HAD A BAD GUY SUIT. LISTEN...CAN I MAKE ALL THIS UP TO YOU SOMEHOW?
I COULD ARRANGE A DAY PASS TO AVENGERS TOWER, MAYBE--IT'D BE GREAT FOR THE BOOK--
THERE IS NO BOOK.
...WHAT?
MY PUBLISHER SAID I WAS GOING "TOO NEGATIVE." SAID I HAD "AN AXE TO GRIND."
THE BOOK'S BEEN KILLED.
GOODBYE, TONY.

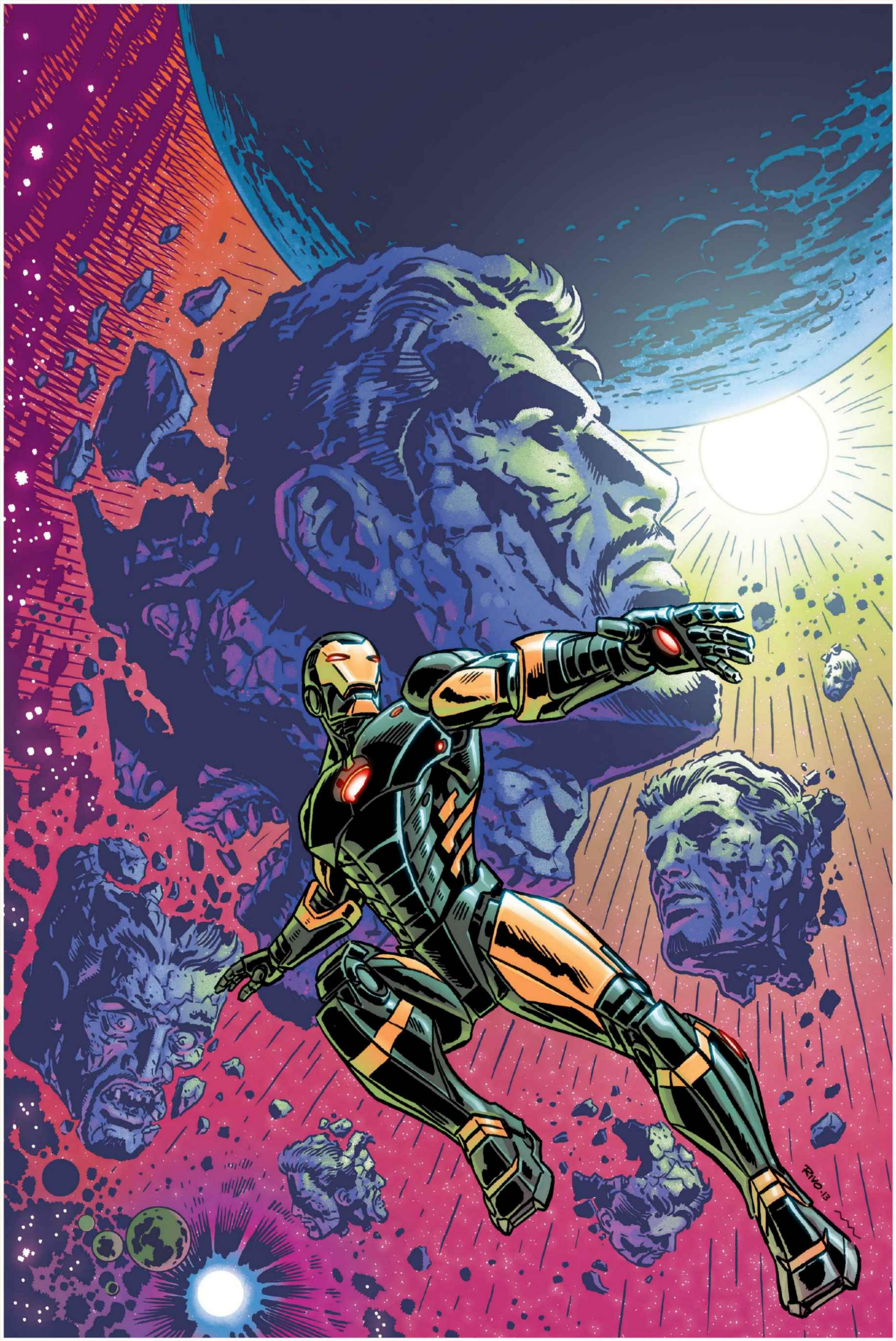

...I HOPE I DON'T HAVE TO LOSE ANOTHER *FRIEND.*
AND... *INITIATE.*
WELCOME BACK TO *LIFE,* MR. UDARNIK.
LISTEN, I'VE GOT A *SHUTTLE* WAITING, AND THEN WHEN WE GET BACK TO *EARTH* I CAN *INTRODUCE* YOU TO SOME PEOPLE.
THERE'S A GUY CALLED *HANK PYM--* *NATASHA,* SHE'LL WANT TO MEET YOU--*BRUCE,* YOU'LL LIKE BRUCE, YOU'VE GOT THINGS IN COMMON--
--YOU WON'T BE *ALONE,* IS WHAT I'M SAYING.
YOU WON'T BE ALONE ANY MORE.
UM...
UDARNIK?
JUST *TALK* TO ME--PLEASE--
UDARNIK--
UDARNIK...

TONY'S PERSONAL SHUTTLE.


I BROKE EVERY PROMISE I EVER MADE TO HIM. I GAVE HIM *HOPE* AND THEN I *DESTROYED* IT.
WHY *SHOULD* HE BELIEVE ME? WHY *SHOULDN'T* HE WALK AWAY?
EXCEPT.
EXCEPT I *WASN'T* LYING.
I *WILL* COME BACK.
WE'LL *ALL* COME BACK.
WE LEFT TOO MUCH OF *OURSELVES* ON THE MOON. TOO MANY *DREAMS.* TOO MUCH *FUTURE.*
ONE DAY, WE HAVE TO COME *BACK* FOR IT.
FOR *ALL* OF IT. ONE DAY.
ONE DAY...



THE END



IRON MAN ANNUAL #1

The Moon watches over humanity.

In the age of Marvels, what it watched changed it. From Cosmic Storms that transformed four explorers into fire, liquid, air and earth to a force of eternal life and rebirth that came here to die, energies bombarded it. And unprotected by any atmosphere, when a crucial threshold was reached, it changed...

A new metal. Phlogistone, the Moon Mercury. A miracle fuel, that would justify our silvery neighbor's colonization.

Or so thought abandoned Soviet probe, Udarnik The Shockworker. Sent to the moon as a vanguard for a people who never came, he spent decades in isolation. Now, with real fuel for his Crimson Dynamos, he built a city for anyone who would finally come...

Corporations, scientists, governments and organizations came to Tranquility Gulch in a Gold Rush to the heavens. Keeping Law was Tony Stark, the Iron Man. He played them all against one another, to keep peace, to keep the Phlogistone from getting out of control. He already had enemies, and made many more.

Bar its sheer power, there was one serious problem with the metal. It poisoned humans. It would kill them. It drove them mad. It would kill the planet. In the end, suffering from exposure and hallucinating his long-dead friend Yinsen, Tony managed to neutralize all the metal and so save the world.

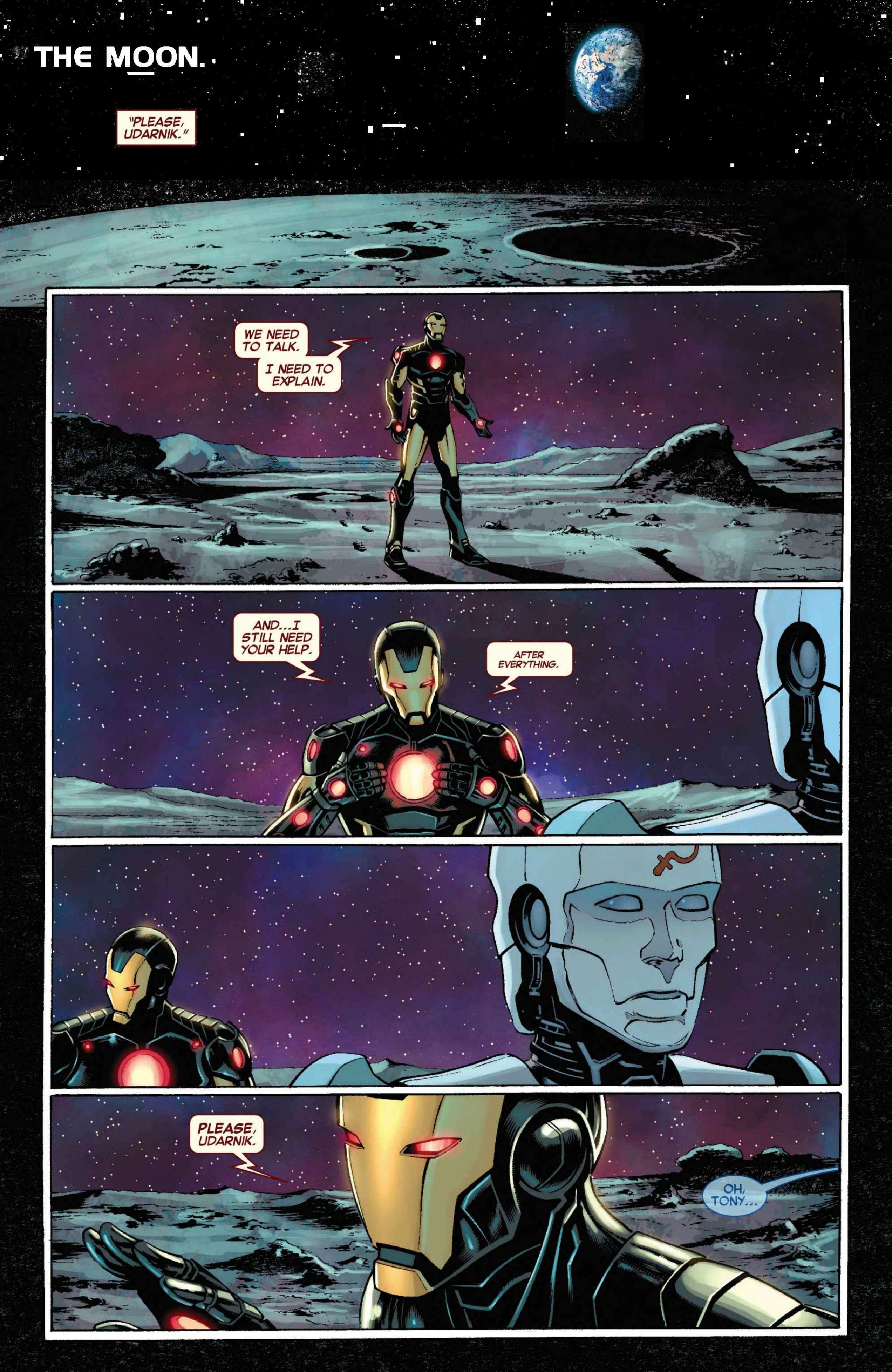
But with no reason to stay, Tranquility Gulch was abandoned.

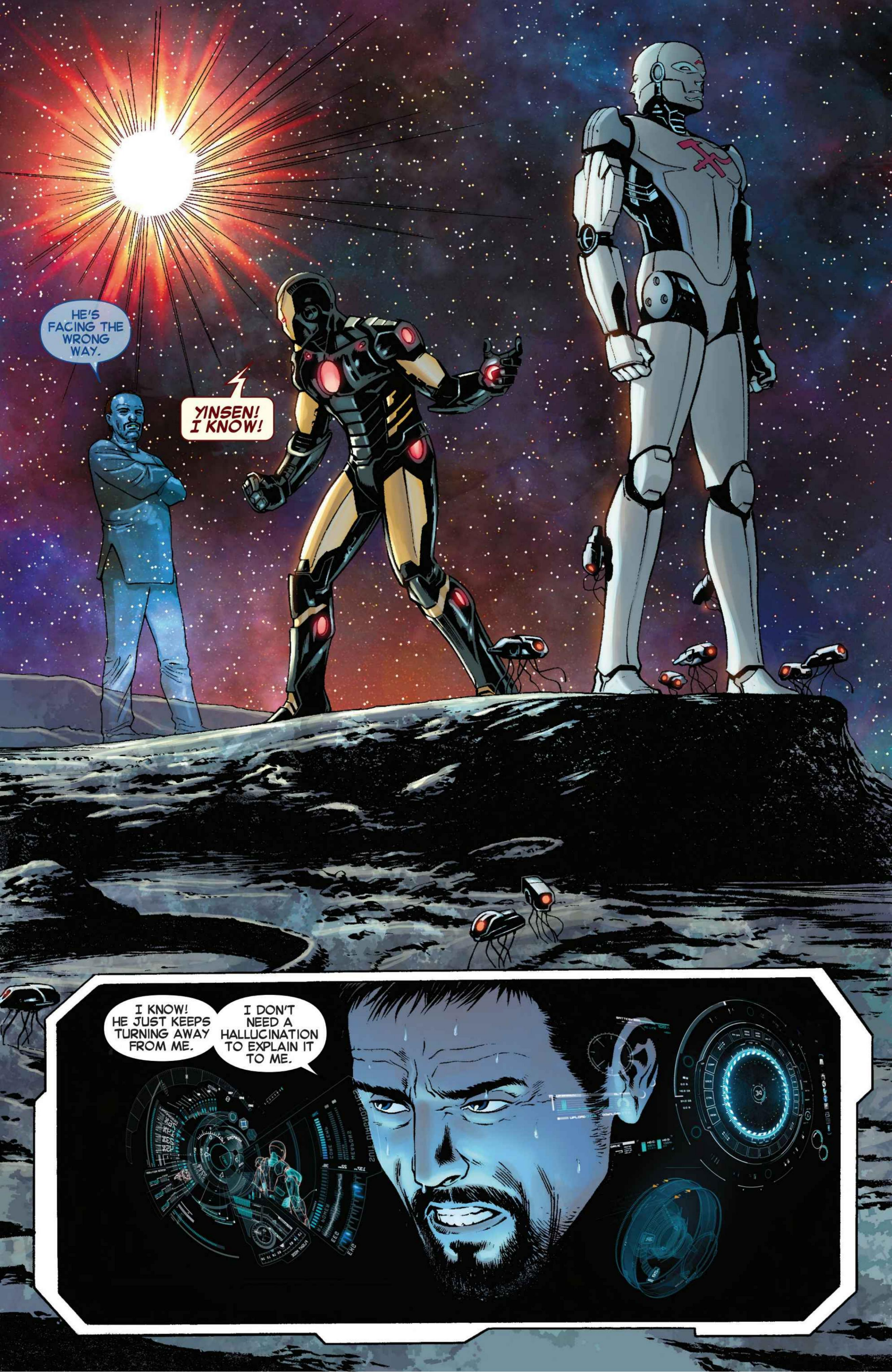
Earth lived. The Moon died.

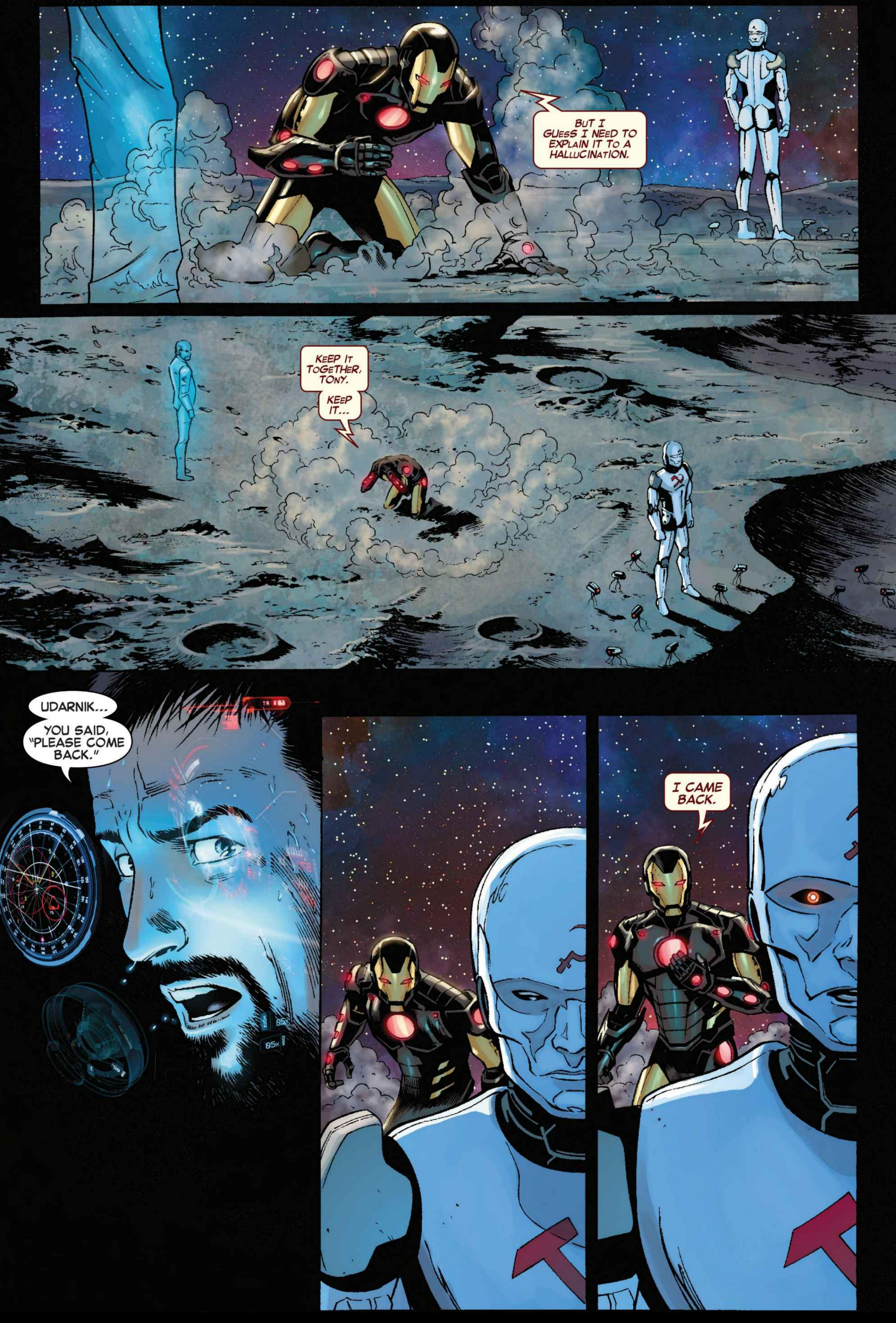
The following stories happen in the shadow of the moon.

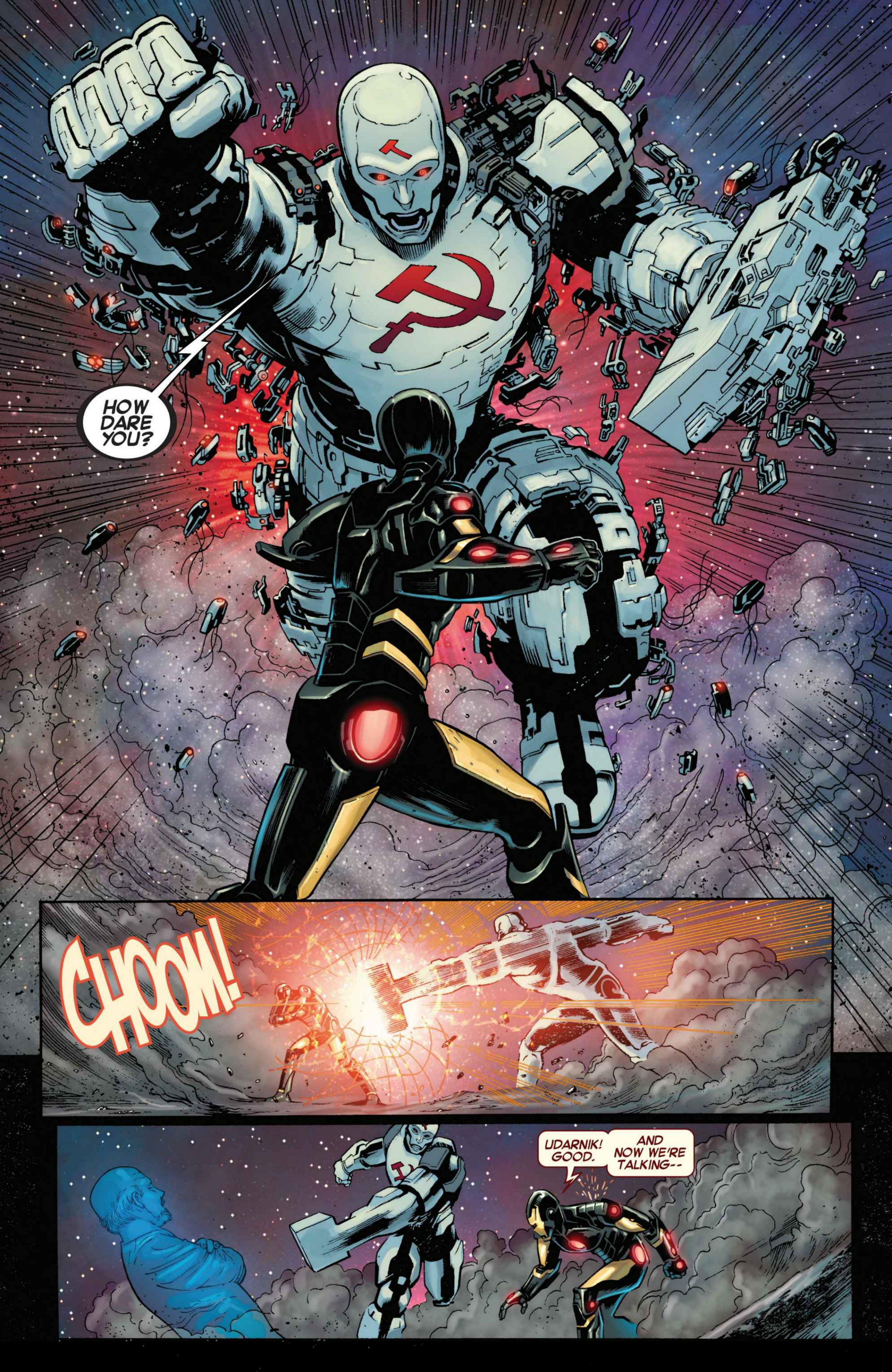
TWO CITIES

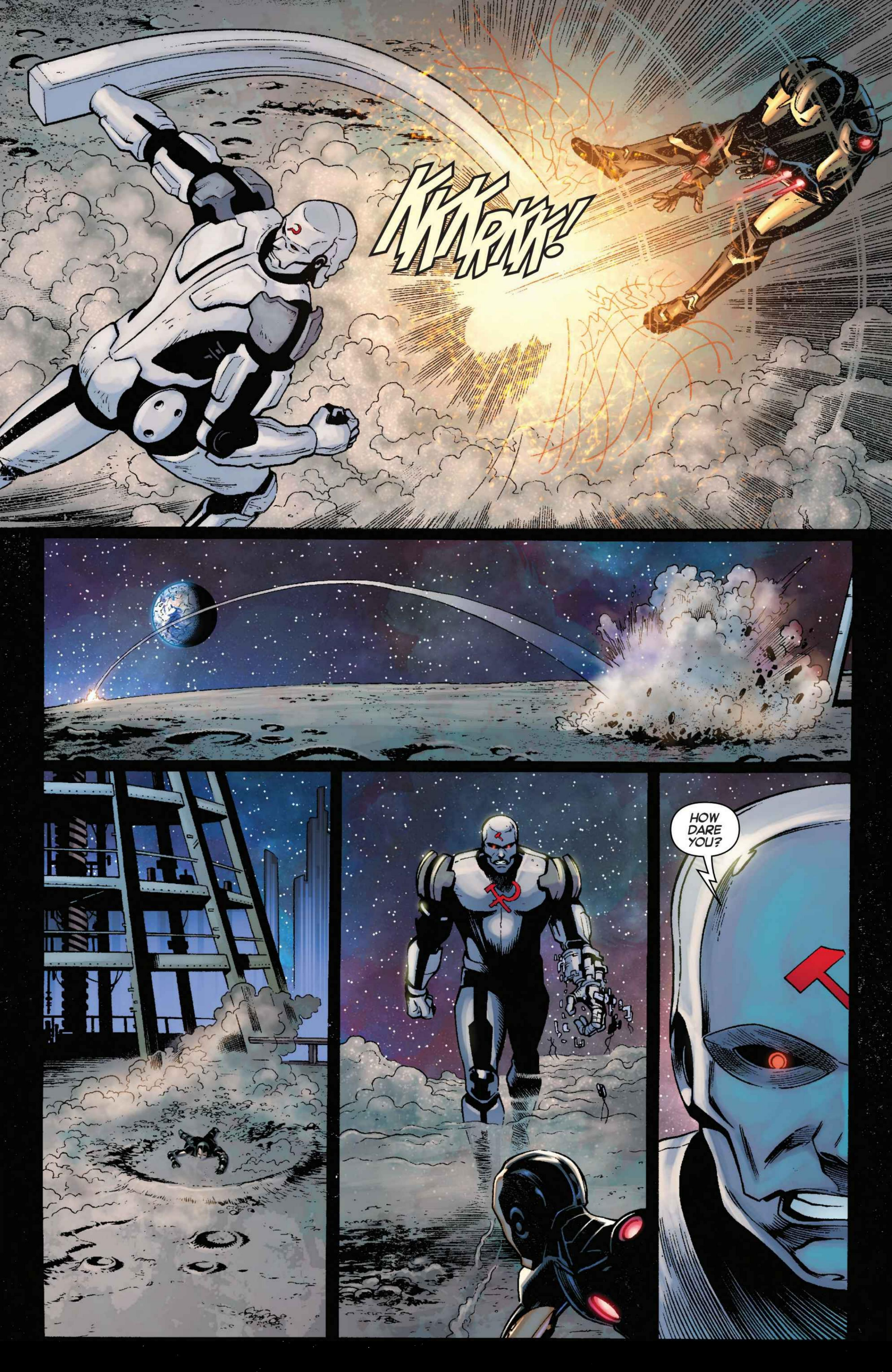
WRITTEN BY KIERON GILLEN DRAWN BY ALVARO MARTINEZ INKED BY RAUL FERNANDEZ
COLORED BY CHRIS SOTOMAYOR LETTERED BY VC's JOE CARAMAGNA

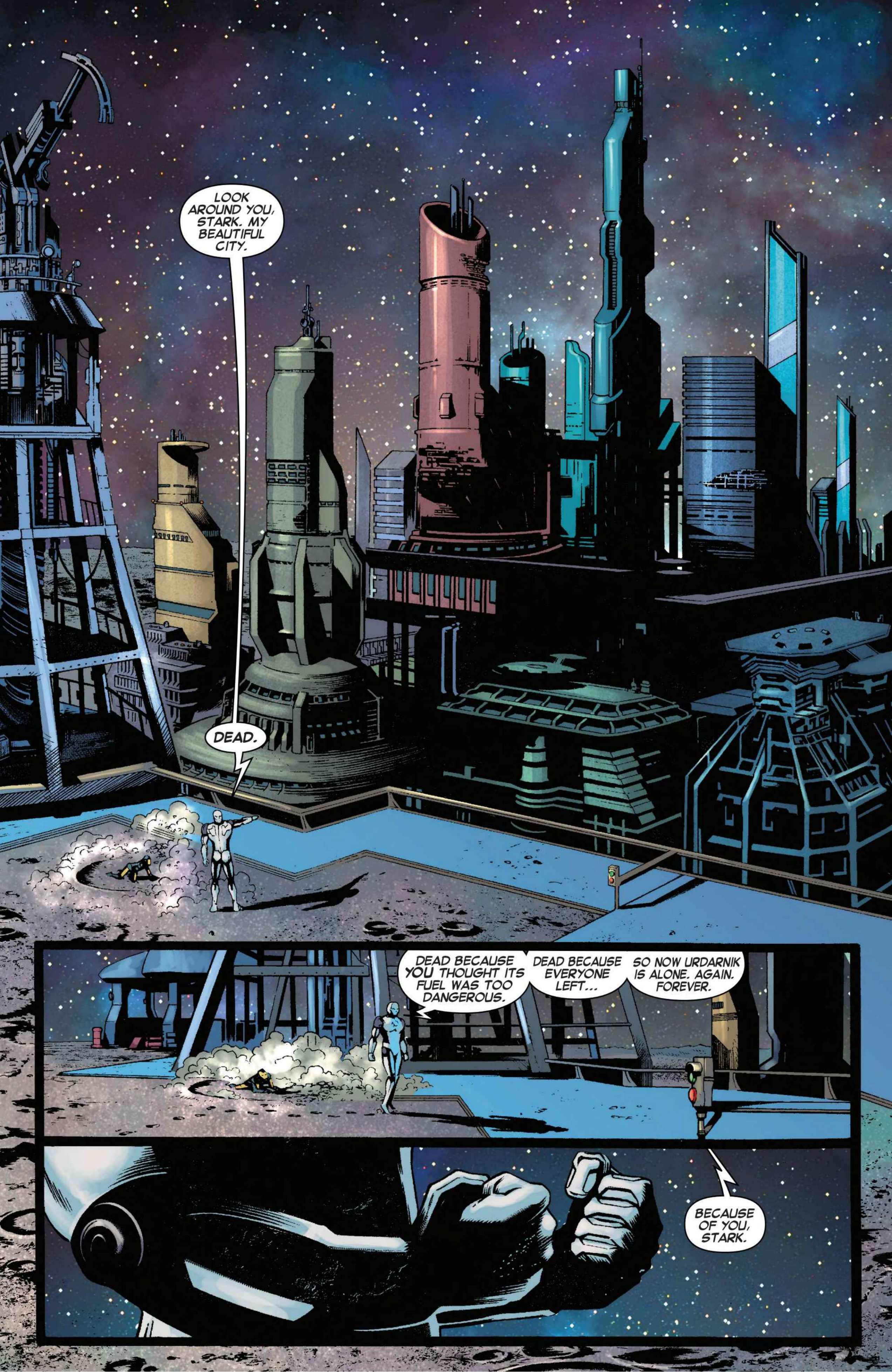

THE MOON.
"PLEASE, UDARNIK."
WE NEED TO TALK.
I NEED TO EXPLAIN.
AND...I STILL NEED YOUR HELP.
AFTER EVERYTHING.
PLEASE, UDARNIK.
OH, TONY...

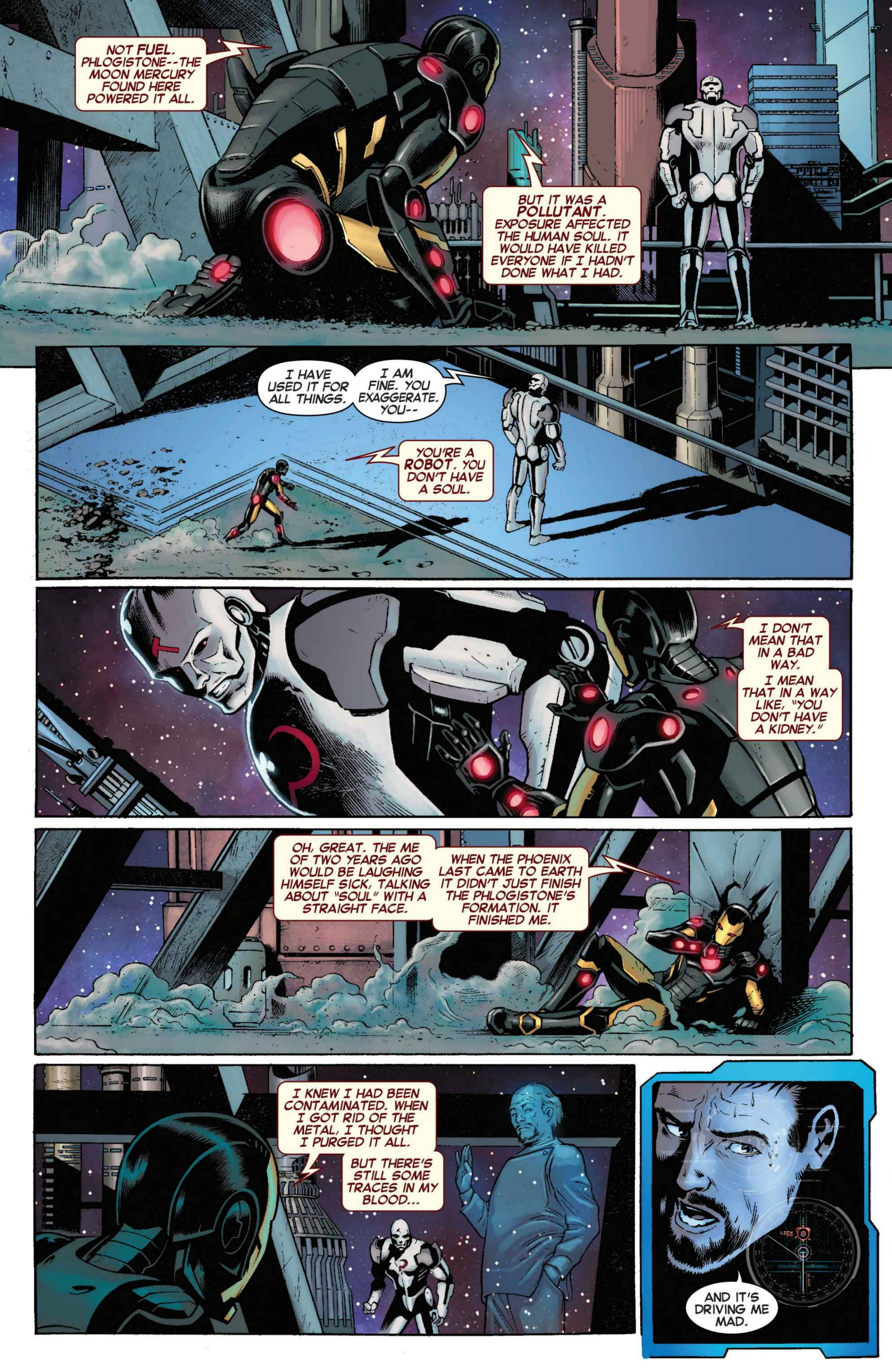

HE'S FACING THE WRONG WAY.
YINSEN! I KNOW!
I KNOW! HE JUST KEEPS TURNING AWAY FROM ME.
I DON'T NEED A HALLUCINATION TO EXPLAIN IT TO ME.

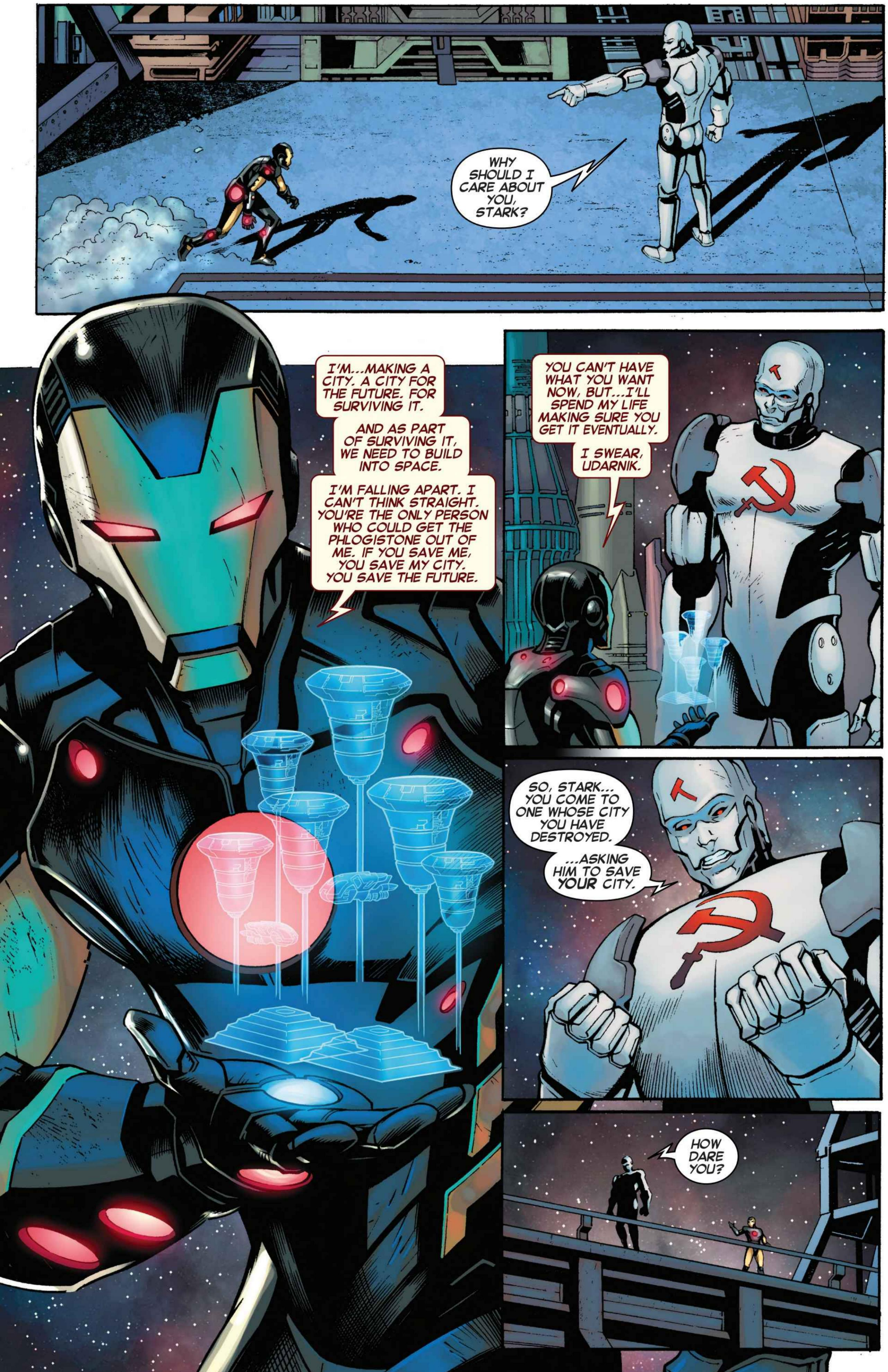

BUT I GUESS I NEED TO EXPLAIN IT TO A HALLUCINATION.
KEEP IT TOGETHER, TONY.
KEEP IT...
UDARNIK...
YOU SAID, "PLEASE COME BACK."
I CAME BACK.

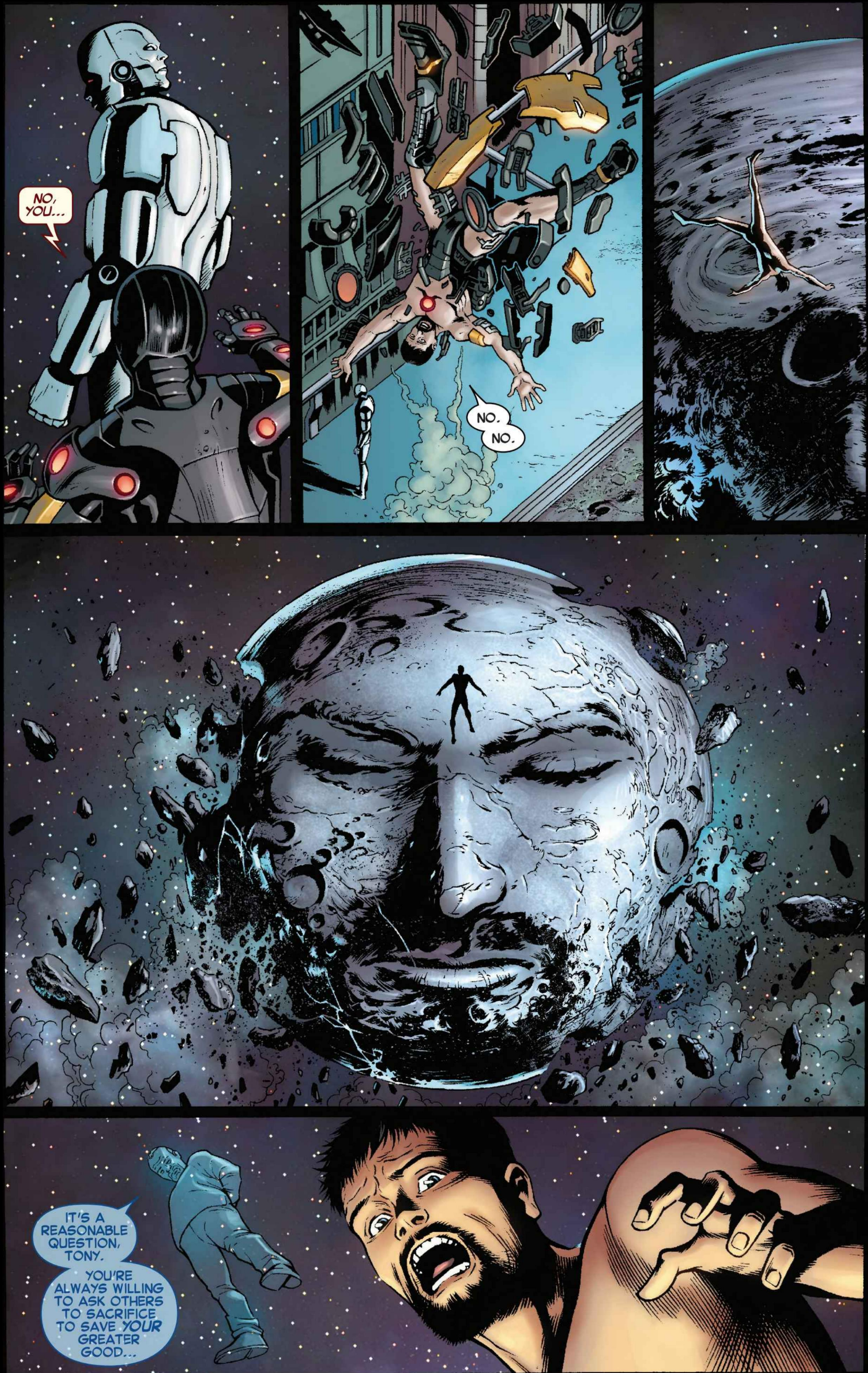

HOW DARE YOU?
CHOOM!
UDARNIK! GOOD.
AND NOW WE'RE TALKING--

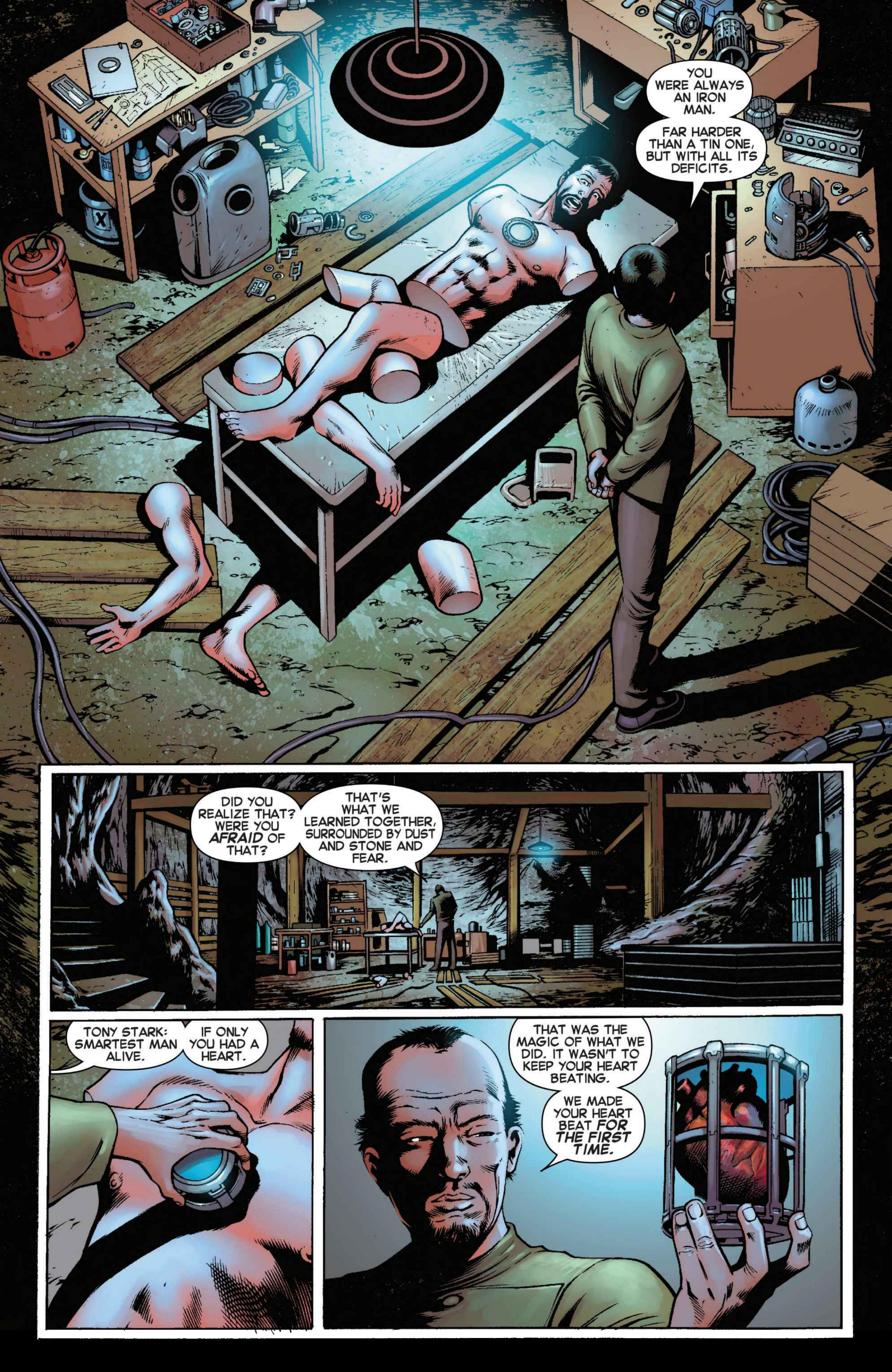

KKKRAKK!
HOW DARE YOU?

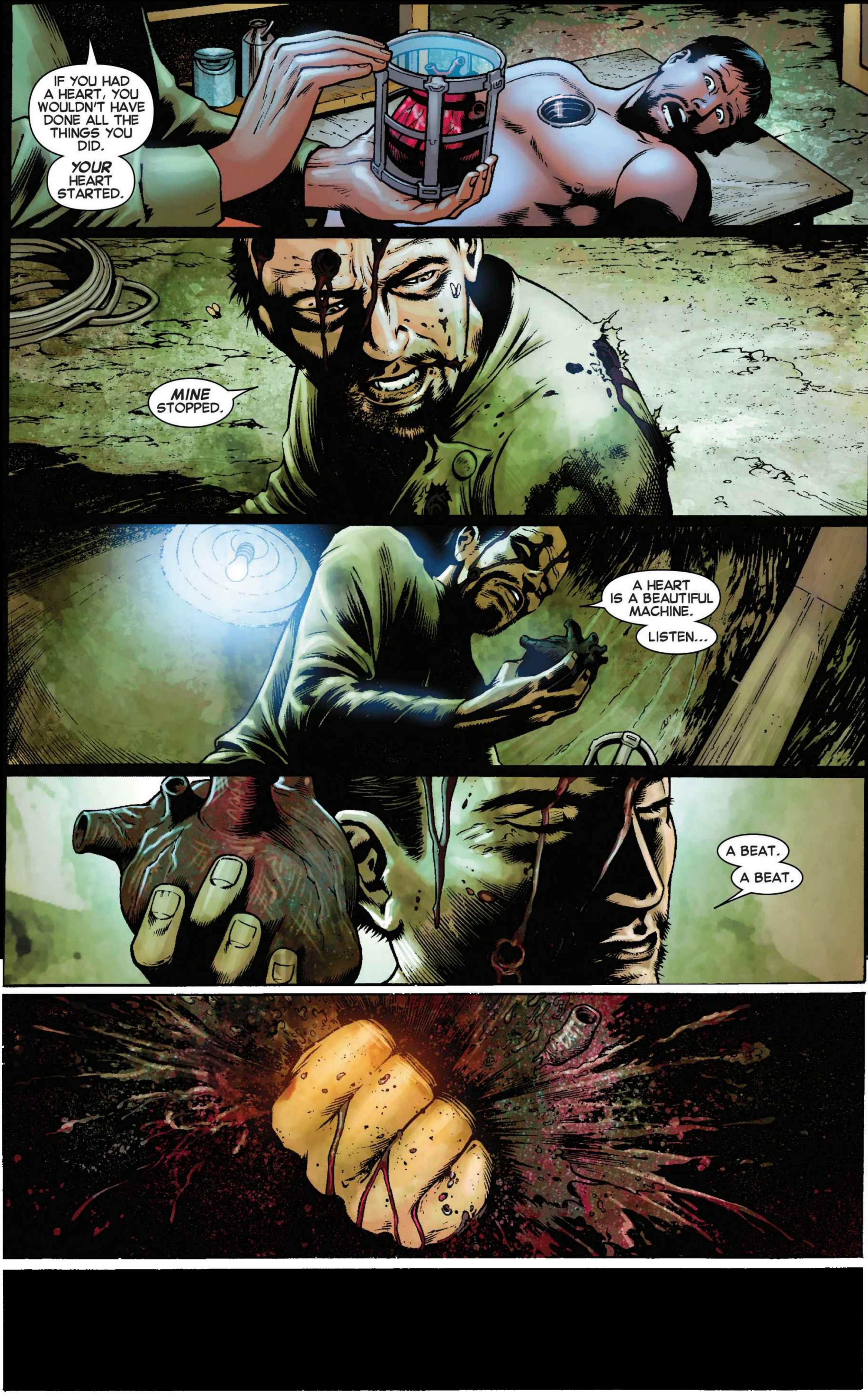

LOOK AROUND YOU, STARK. MY BEAUTIFUL CITY.
DEAD.
DEAD BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT ITS FUEL WAS TOO DANGEROUS.
DEAD BECAUSE EVERYONE LEFT...
SO NOW URDARNIK IS ALONE. AGAIN. FOREVER.
BECAUSE OF YOU, STARK.

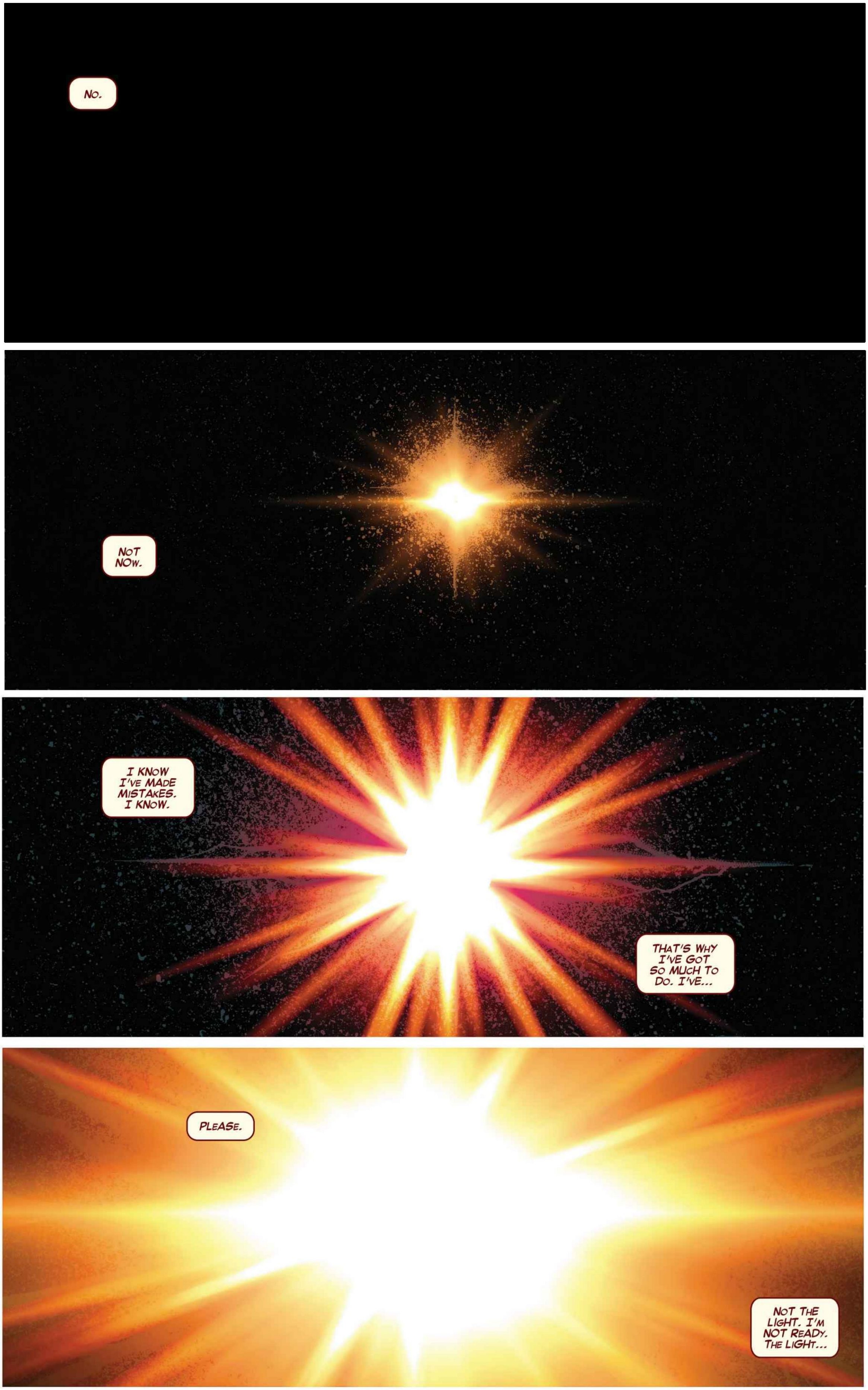

NOT FUEL. PHLOGISTONE--THE MOON MERCURY FOUND HERE POWERED IT ALL.
BUT IT WAS A POLLUTANT. EXPOSURE AFFECTED THE HUMAN SOUL. IT WOULD HAVE KILLED EVERYONE IF I HADN'T DONE WHAT I HAD.
I HAVE USED IT FOR ALL THINGS.
I AM FINE. YOU EXAGGERATE. YOU--
YOU'RE A ROBOT. YOU DON'T HAVE A SOUL.
I DON'T MEAN THAT IN A BAD WAY. I MEAN THAT IN A WAY LIKE, "YOU DON'T HAVE A KIDNEY."
OH, GREAT. THE ME OF TWO YEARS AGO WOULD BE LAUGHING HIMSELF SICK, TALKING ABOUT "SOUL" WITH A STRAIGHT FACE.
WHEN THE PHOENIX LAST CAME TO EARTH IT DIDN'T JUST FINISH THE PHLOGISTONE'S FORMATION. IT FINISHED ME.
I KNEW I HAD BEEN CONTAMINATED. WHEN I GOT RID OF THE METAL, I THOUGHT I PURGED IT ALL.
BUT THERE'S STILL SOME TRACES IN MY BLOOD...
LOCK
AND IT'S DRIVING ME MAD.

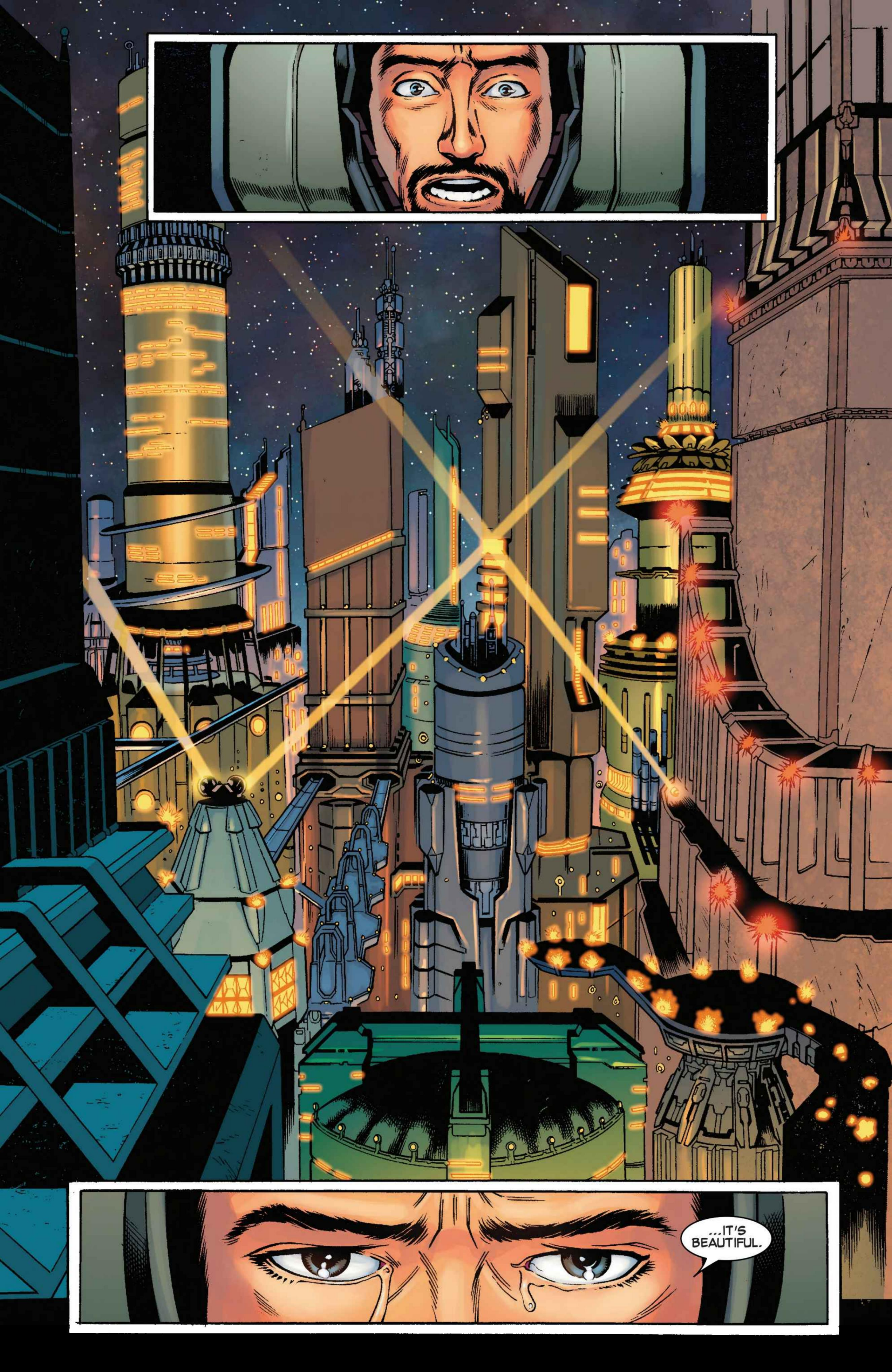

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT YOU, STARK?
I'M...MAKING A CITY. A CITY FOR THE FUTURE. FOR SURVIVING IT.
AND AS PART OF SURVIVING IT, WE NEED TO BUILD INTO SPACE.
I'M FALLING APART. I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT. YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD GET THE PHLOGISTONE OUT OF ME. IF YOU SAVE ME, YOU SAVE MY CITY. YOU SAVE THE FUTURE.
YOU CAN'T HAVE WHAT YOU WANT NOW, BUT...I'LL SPEND MY LIFE MAKING SURE YOU GET IT EVENTUALLY.
I SWEAR, UDARNIK.
SO, STARK... YOU COME TO ONE WHOSE CITY YOU HAVE DESTROYED.
...ASKING HIM TO SAVE YOUR CITY.
HOW DARE YOU?

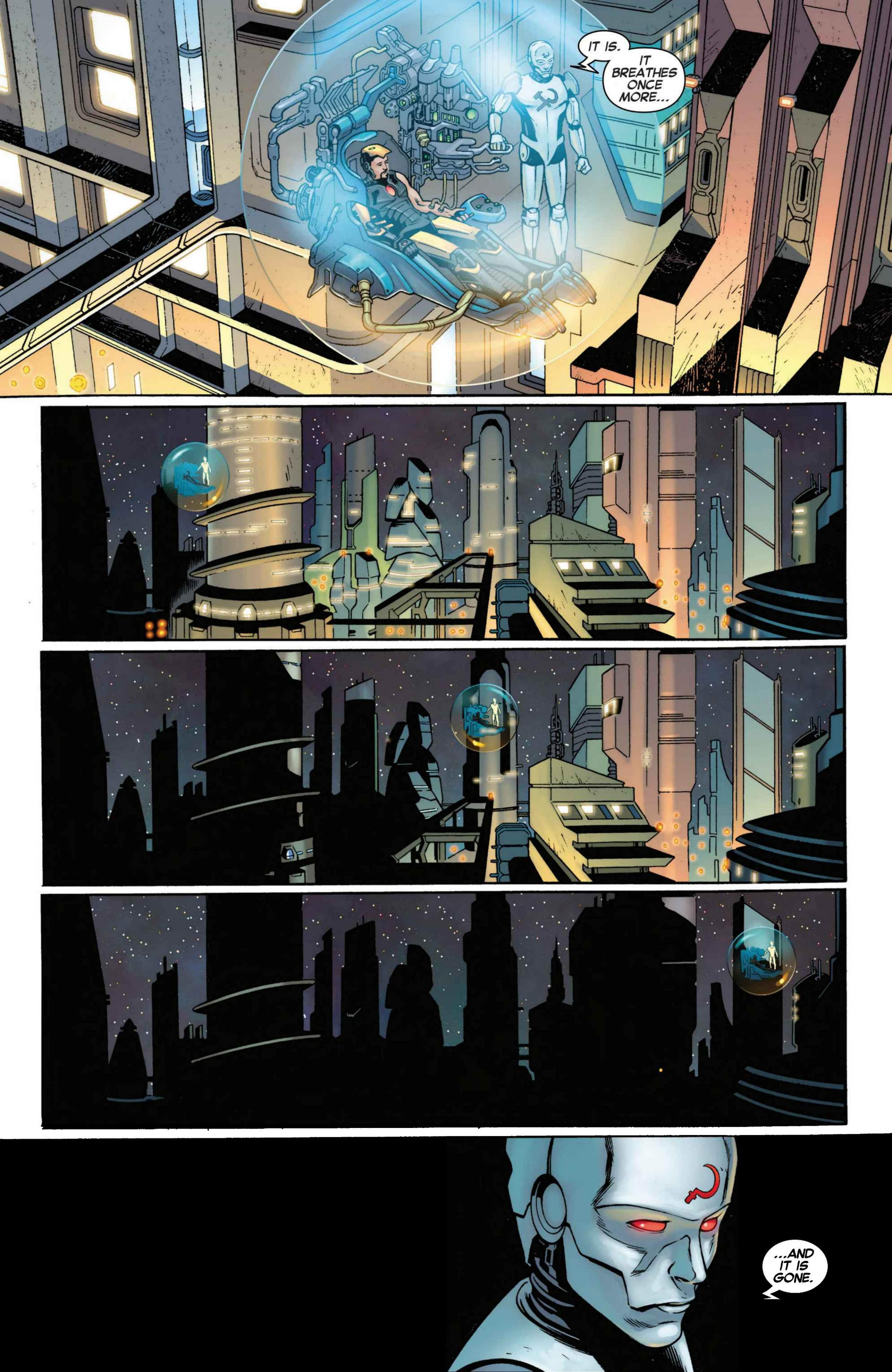

NO, YOU...
NO. NO.
IT'S A REASONABLE QUESTION, TONY.
YOU'RE ALWAYS WILLING TO ASK OTHERS TO SACRIFICE TO SAVE YOUR GREATER GOOD...

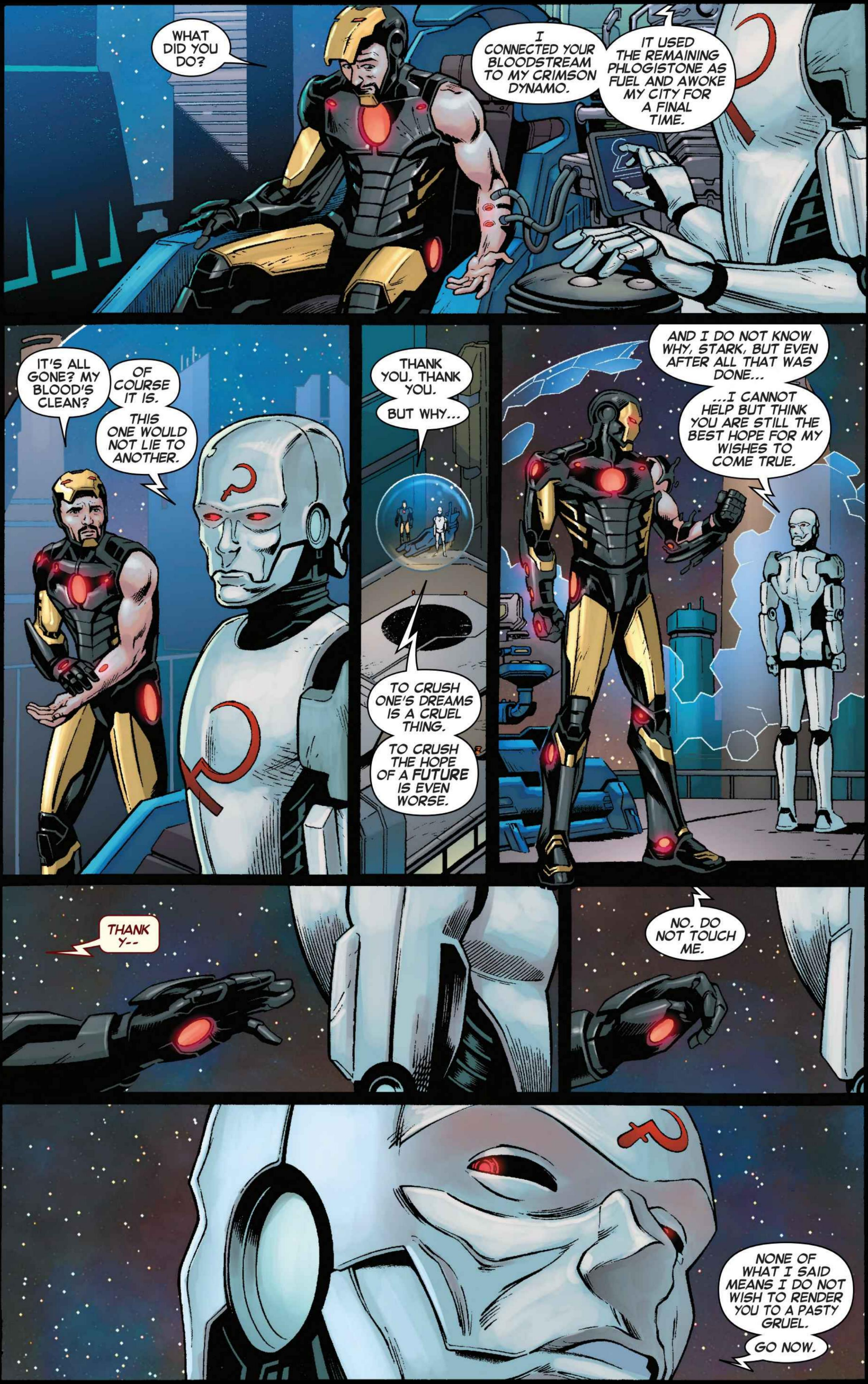

YOU WERE ALWAYS AN IRON MAN.
FAR HARDER THAN A TIN ONE, BUT WITH ALL ITS DEFICITS.
DID YOU REALIZE THAT? WERE YOU *AFRAID* OF THAT?
THAT'S WHAT WE LEARNED TOGETHER, SURROUNDED BY DUST AND STONE AND FEAR.
TONY STARK: SMARTEST MAN ALIVE.
IF ONLY YOU HAD A HEART.
THAT WAS THE MAGIC OF WHAT WE DID. IT WASN'T TO KEEP YOUR HEART BEATING.
WE MADE YOUR HEART BEAT *FOR THE FIRST TIME.*

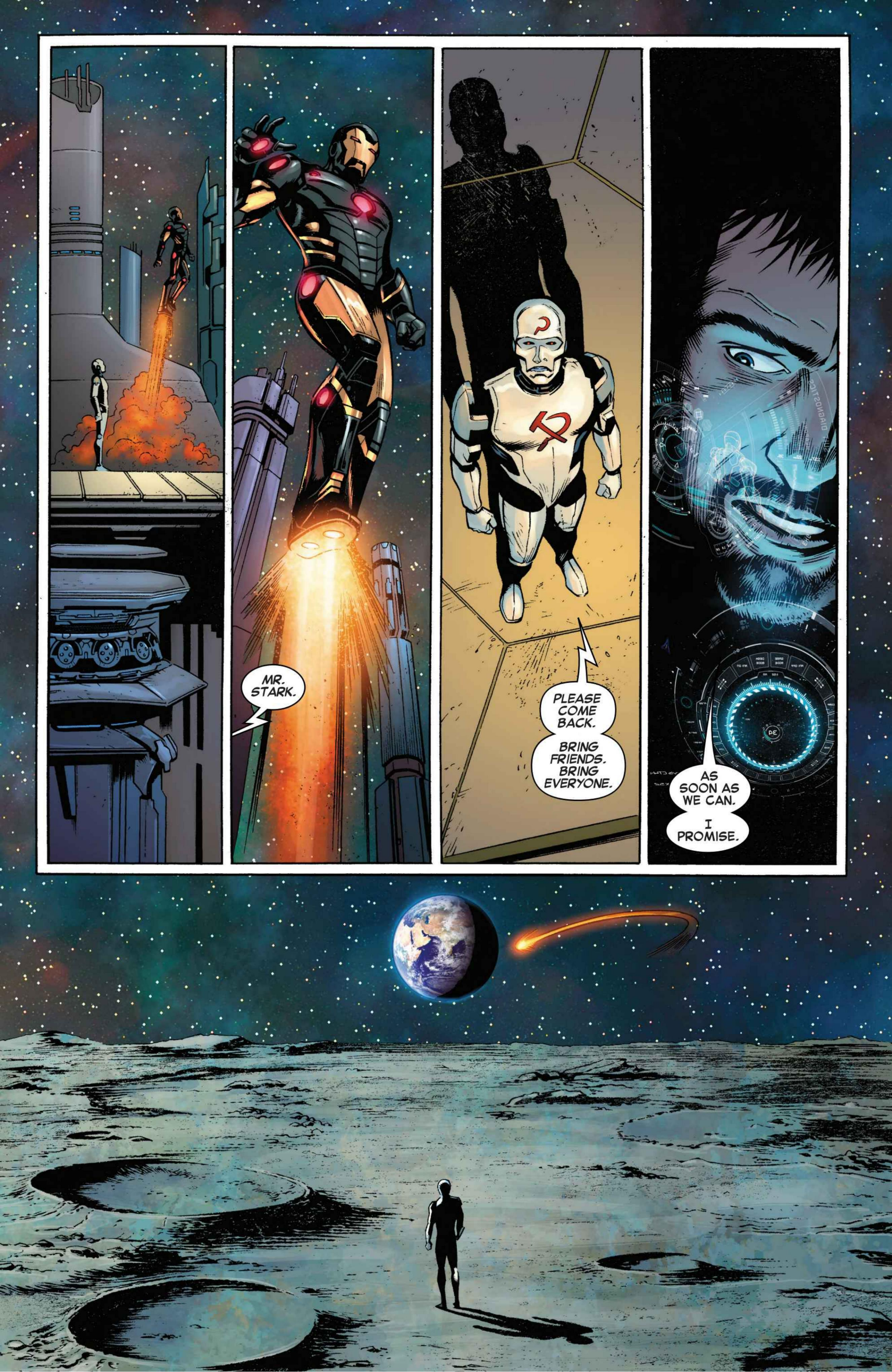

IF YOU HAD A HEART, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE DONE ALL THE THINGS YOU DID.
YOUR HEART STARTED.
MINE STOPPED.
A HEART IS A BEAUTIFUL MACHINE.
LISTEN...
A BEAT.
A BEAT.


NO.
NOT NOW.
I KNOW I'VE MADE MISTAKES. I KNOW.
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT SO MUCH TO DO. I'VE...
PLEASE.
NOT THE LIGHT. I'M NOT READY. THE LIGHT...


...IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

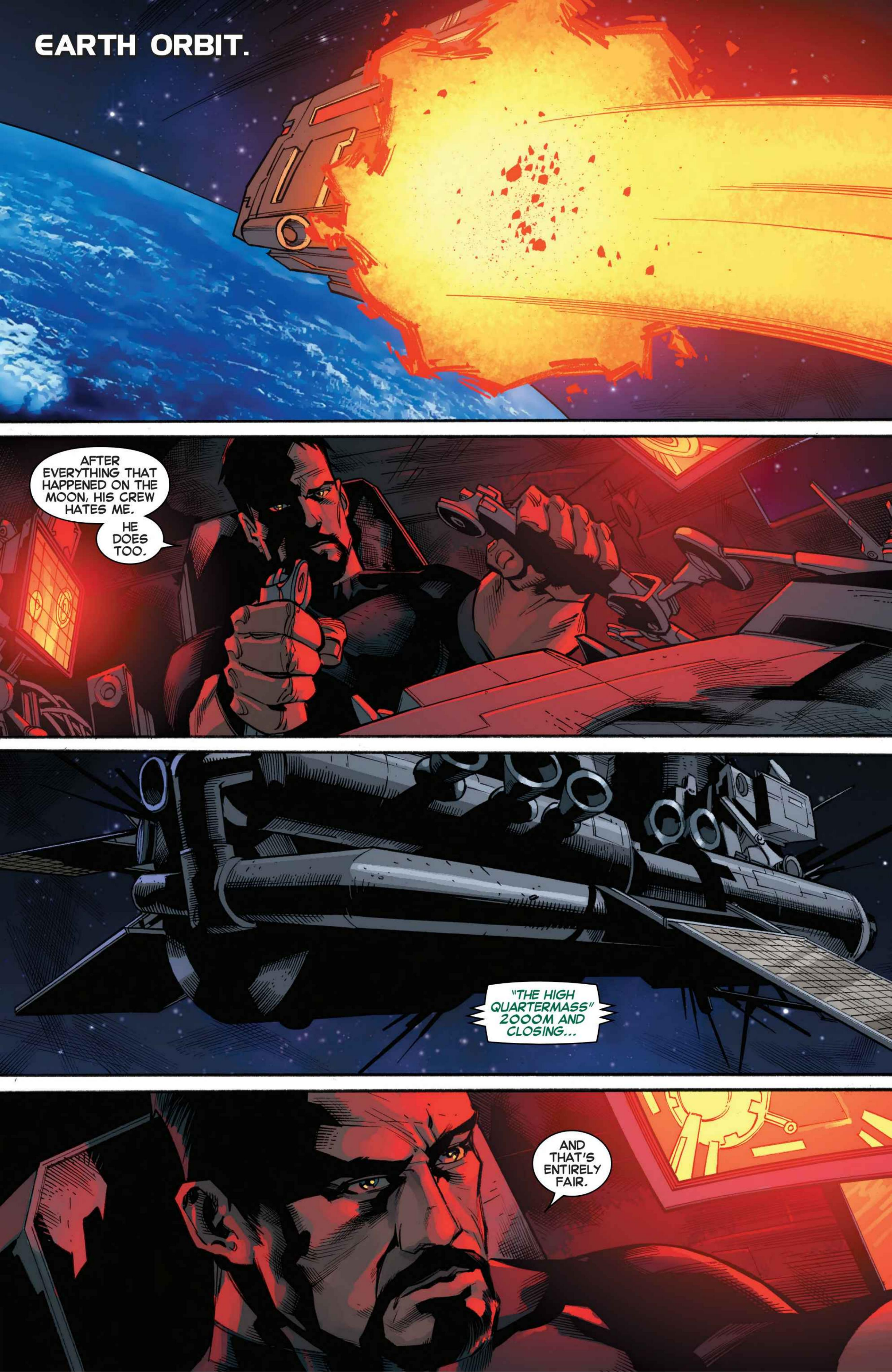

IT IS. IT BREATHES ONCE MORE...
...AND IT IS GONE.

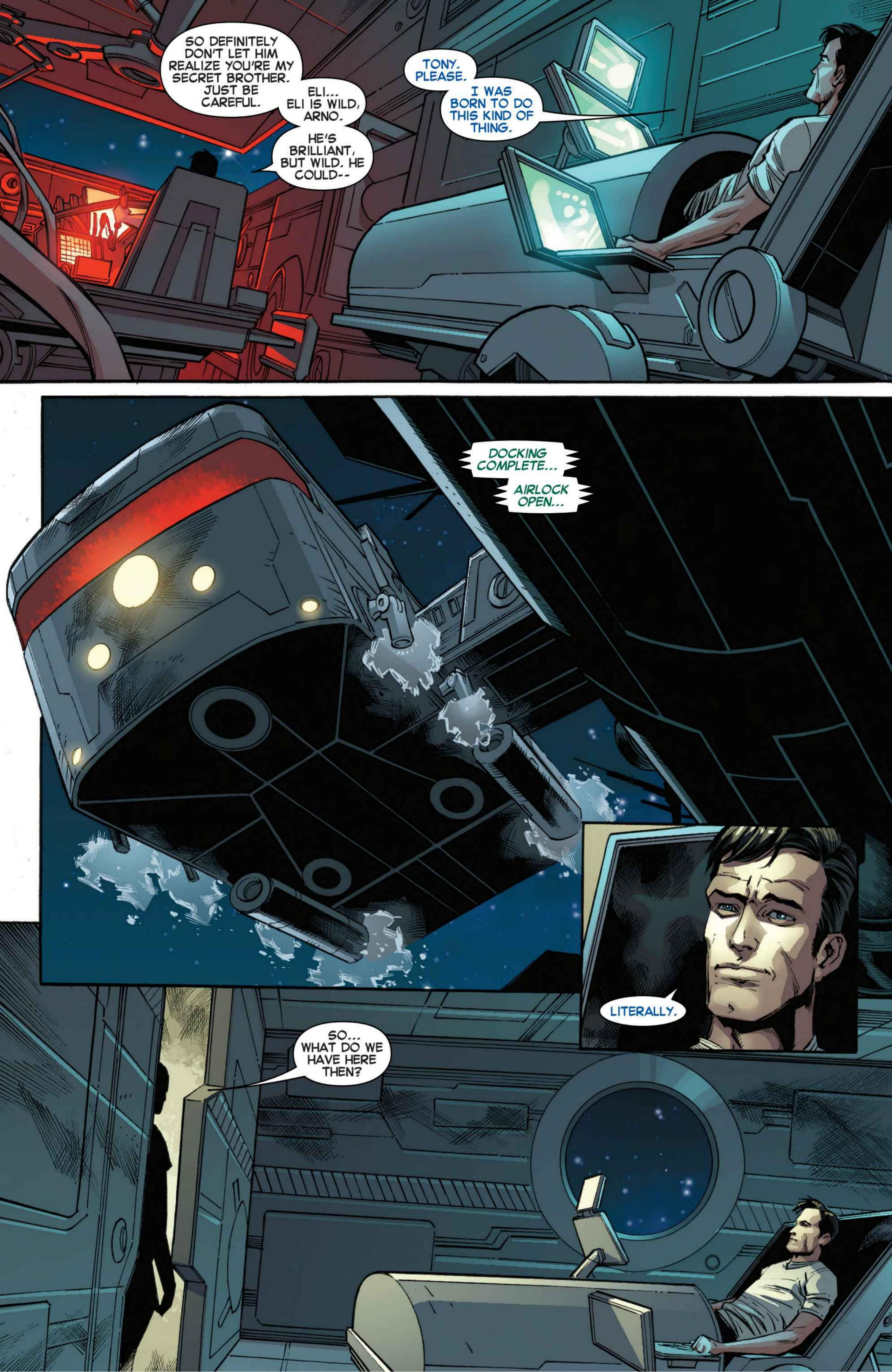

WHAT DID YOU DO?
I CONNECTED YOUR BLOODSTREAM TO MY CRIMSON DYNAMO.
IT USED THE REMAINING PHLOGISTONE AS FUEL AND AWOKE MY CITY FOR A FINAL TIME.
IT'S ALL GONE? MY BLOOD'S CLEAN?
OF COURSE IT IS.
THIS ONE WOULD NOT LIE TO ANOTHER.
THANK YOU. THANK YOU.
BUT WHY...
TO CRUSH ONE'S DREAMS IS A CRUEL THING.
TO CRUSH THE HOPE OF A FUTURE IS EVEN WORSE.
AND I DO NOT KNOW WHY, STARK, BUT EVEN AFTER ALL THAT WAS DONE...
...I CANNOT HELP BUT THINK YOU ARE STILL THE BEST HOPE FOR MY WISHES TO COME TRUE.
THANK Y--
NO. DO NOT TOUCH ME.
NONE OF WHAT I SAID MEANS I DO NOT WISH TO RENDER YOU TO A PASTY GRUEL.
GO NOW.

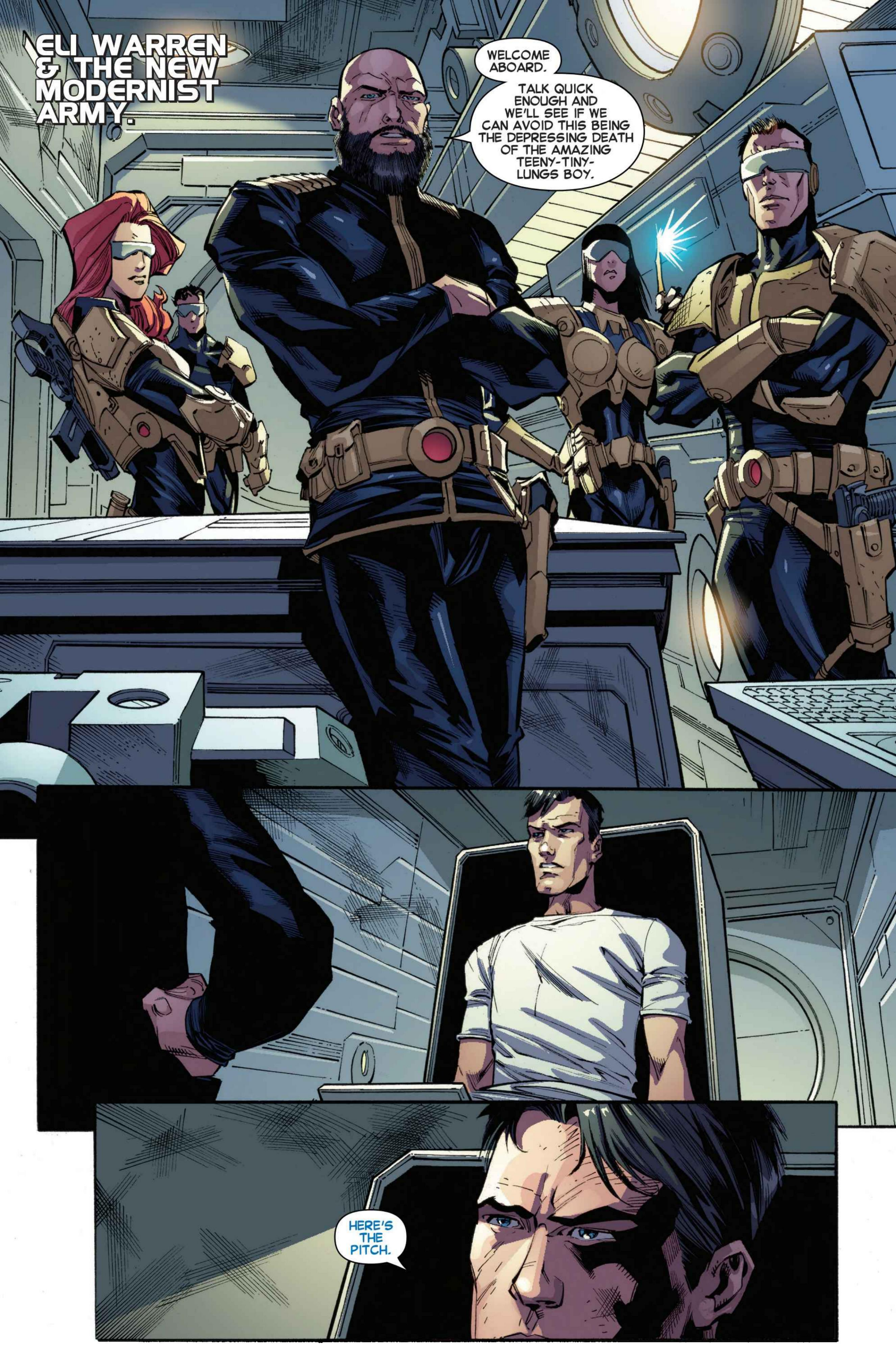

MR. STARK.
PLEASE COME BACK.
BRING FRIENDS. BRING EVERYONE.
AS SOON AS WE CAN.
I PROMISE.

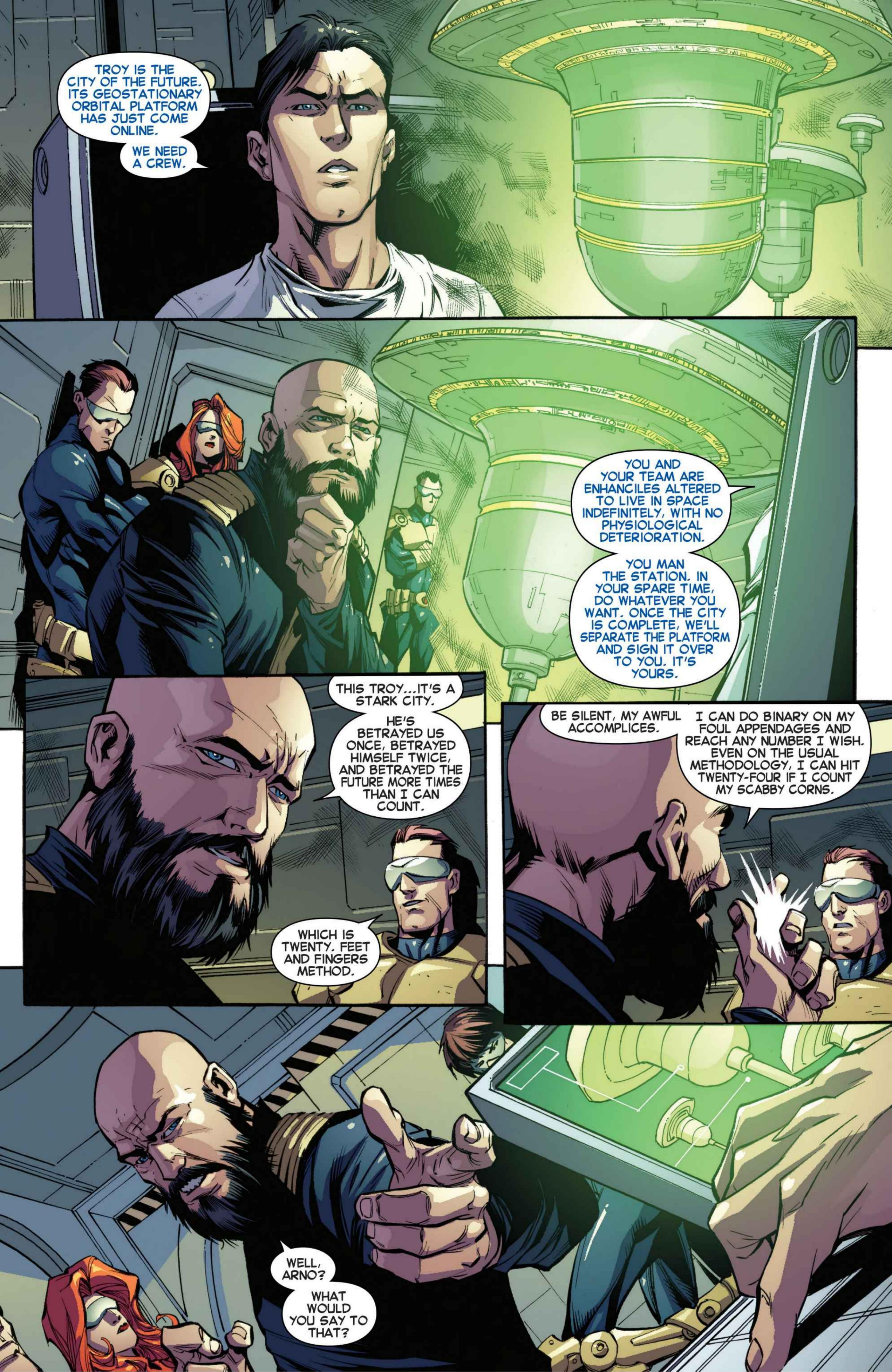
ORBITAL

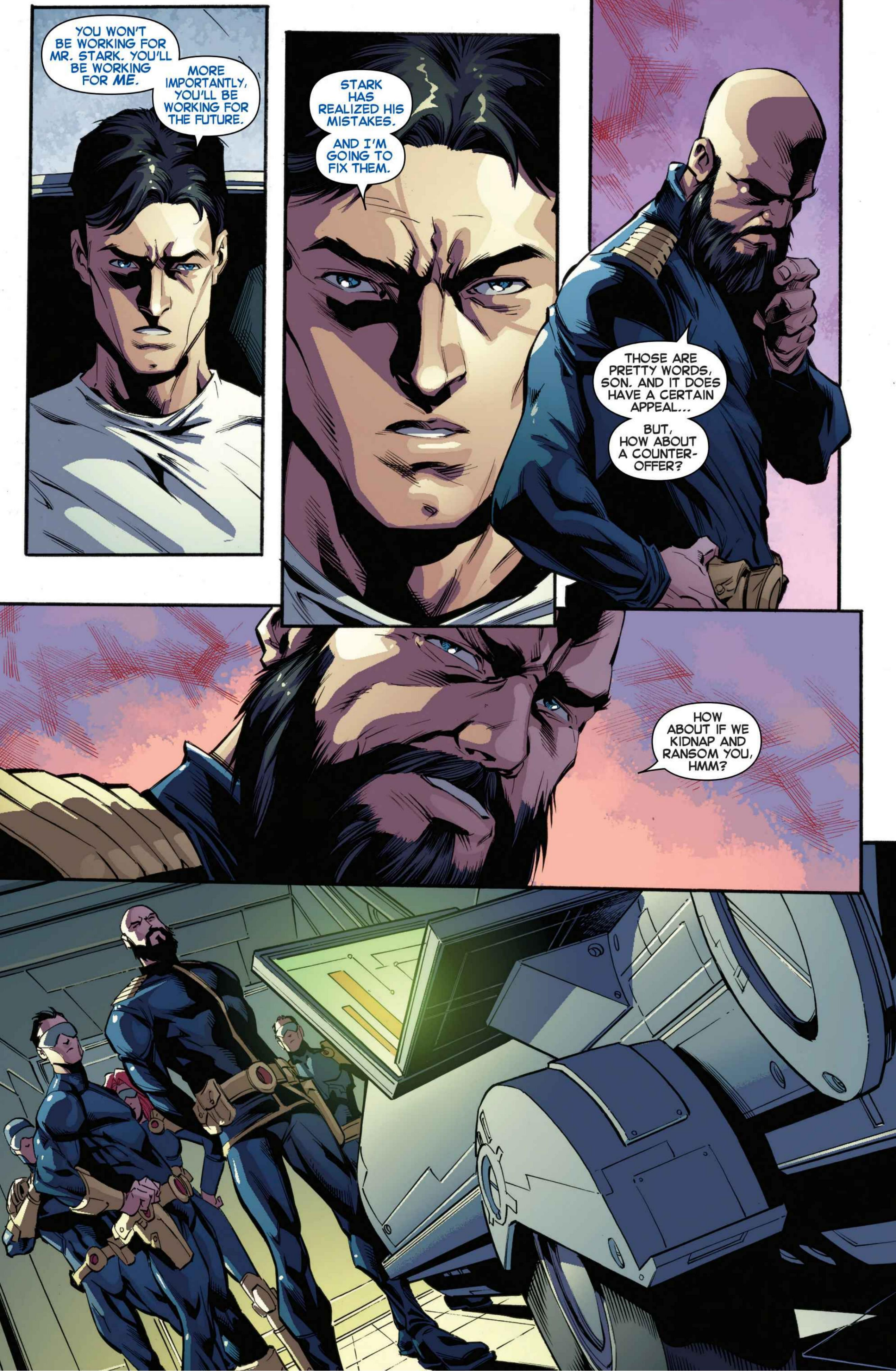
WRITTEN BY KIERON GILLEN PENCILED BY AGUSTIN PADILLA INKED BY SCOTT HANNA
COLORED BY VAL STAPLES LETTERED BY VC's JOE CARAMAGNA

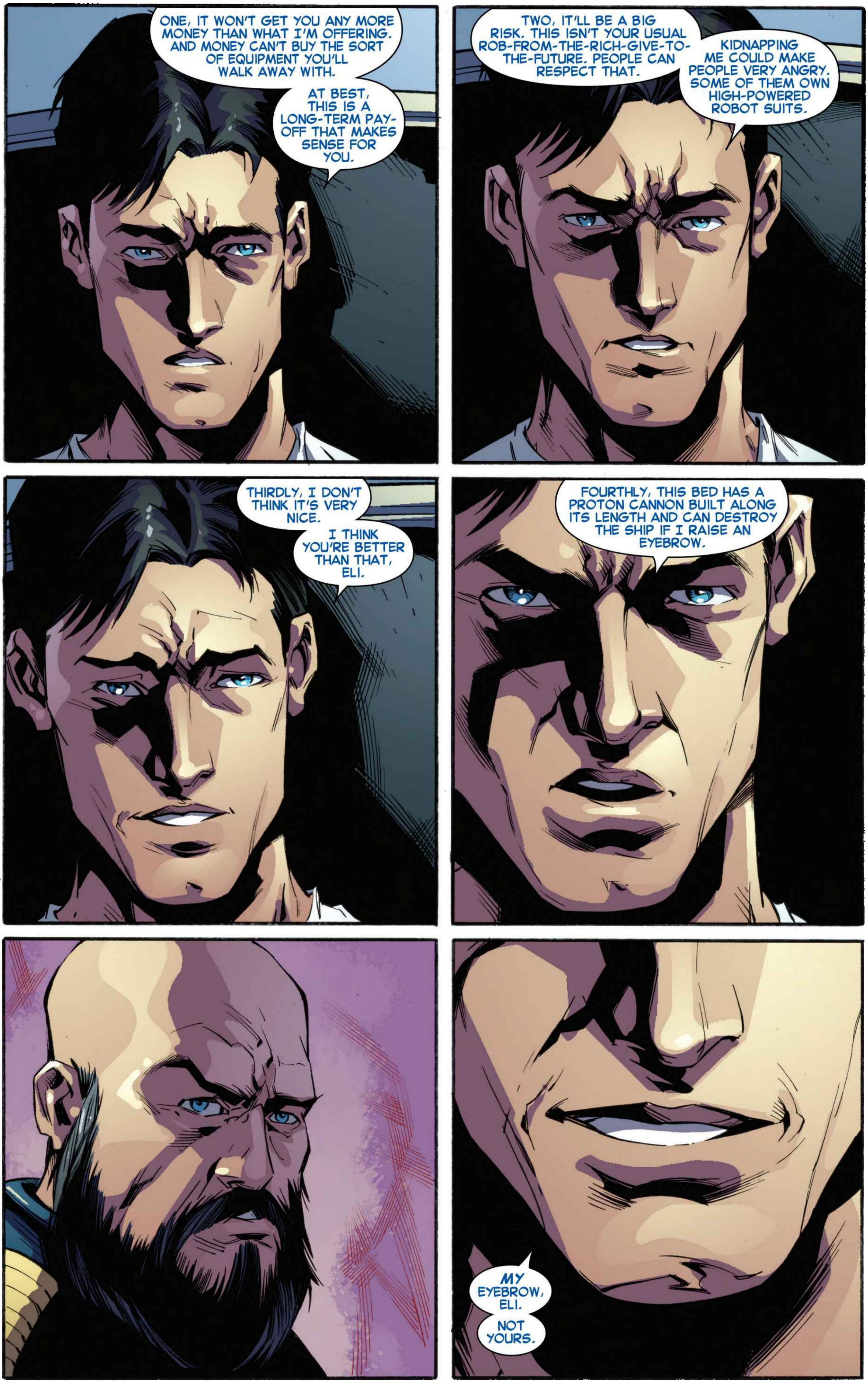

EARTH ORBIT.
AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED ON THE MOON, HIS CREW HATES ME.
HE DOES TOO.
"THE HIGH QUARTERMASS" 2000M AND CLOSING...
AND THAT'S ENTIRELY FAIR.

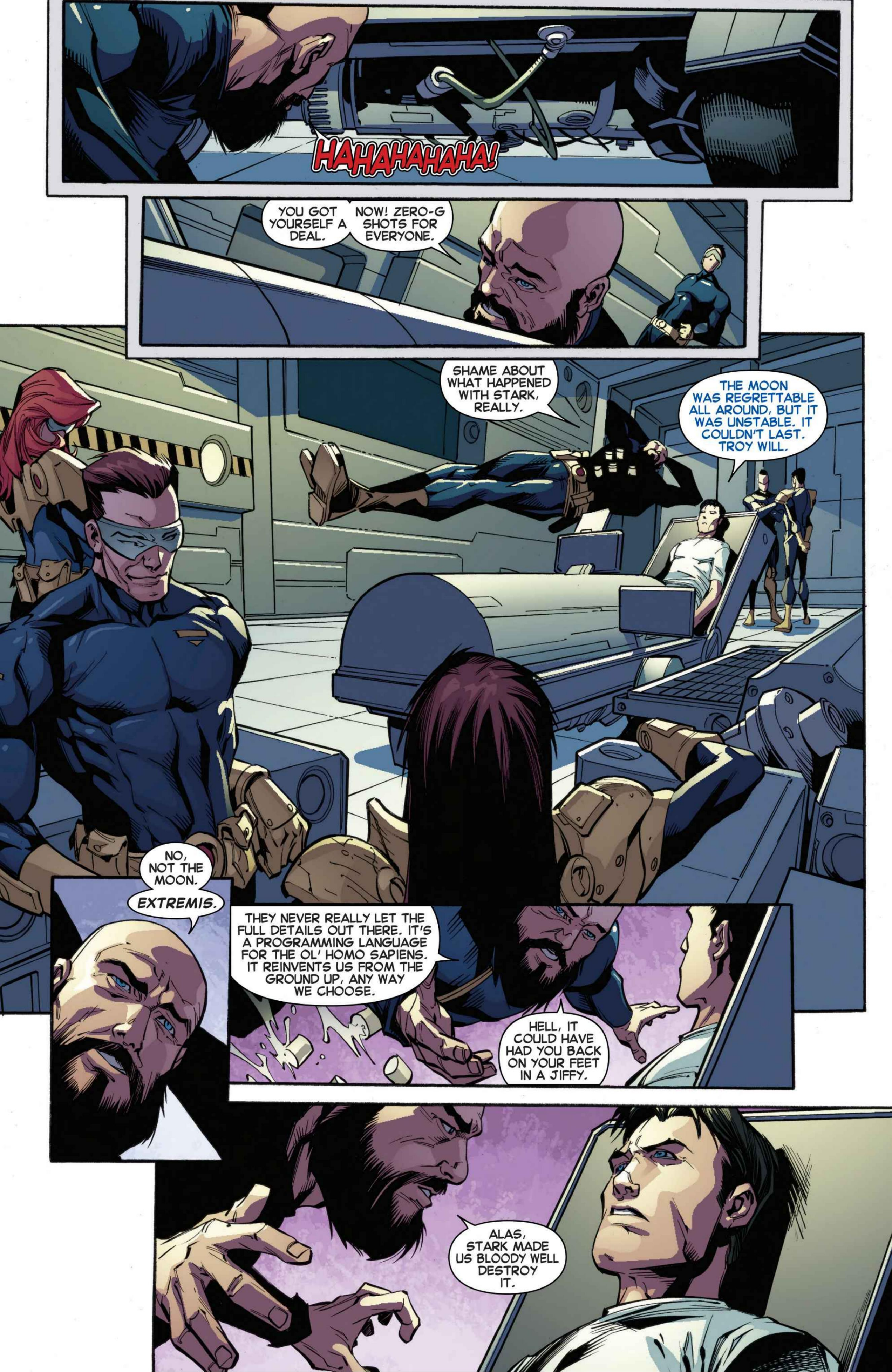

SO DEFINITELY DON'T LET HIM REALIZE YOU'RE MY SECRET BROTHER. JUST BE CAREFUL.
ELI... ELI IS WILD, ARNO.
HE'S BRILLIANT, BUT WILD. HE COULD--
TONY. PLEASE.
I WAS BORN TO DO THIS KIND OF THING.
DOCKING COMPLETE...
AIRLOCK OPEN...
LITERALLY.
SO... WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE THEN?

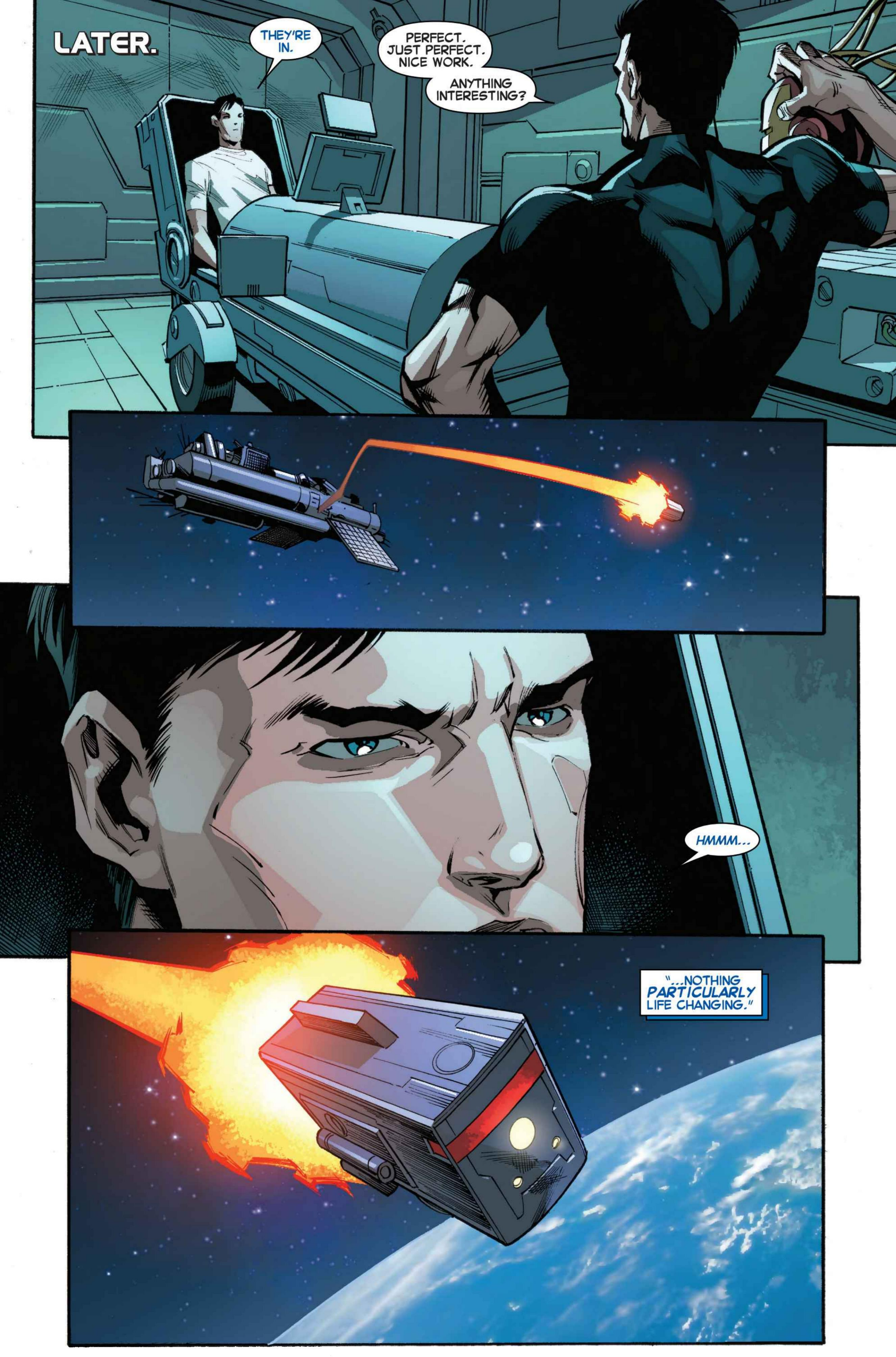

ELI WARREN & THE NEW MODERNIST ARMY.
WELCOME ABOARD.
TALK QUICK ENOUGH AND WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN AVOID THIS BEING THE DEPRESSING DEATH OF THE AMAZING TEENY-TINY-LUNGS BOY.
HERE'S THE PITCH.


TROY IS THE CITY OF THE FUTURE. ITS GEOSTATIONARY ORBITAL PLATFORM HAS JUST COME ONLINE.
WE NEED A CREW.
YOU AND YOUR TEAM ARE ENHANCILES ALTERED TO LIVE IN SPACE INDEFINITELY, WITH NO PHYSIOLOGICAL DETERIORATION.
YOU MAN THE STATION. IN YOUR SPARE TIME, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. ONCE THE CITY IS COMPLETE, WE'LL SEPARATE THE PLATFORM AND SIGN IT OVER TO YOU. IT'S YOURS.
THIS TROY...IT'S A STARK CITY.
HE'S BETRAYED US ONCE, BETRAYED HIMSELF TWICE, AND BETRAYED THE FUTURE MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT.
WHICH IS TWENTY. FEET AND FINGERS METHOD.
BE SILENT, MY AWFUL ACCOMPLICES.
I CAN DO BINARY ON MY FOUL APPENDAGES AND REACH ANY NUMBER I WISH. EVEN ON THE USUAL METHODOLOGY, I CAN HIT TWENTY-FOUR IF I COUNT MY SCABBY CORNS.
WELL, ARNO?
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THAT?


YOU WON'T BE WORKING FOR MR. STARK. YOU'LL BE WORKING FOR *ME*.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU'LL BE WORKING FOR THE FUTURE.
STARK HAS REALIZED HIS MISTAKES.
AND I'M GOING TO FIX THEM.
THOSE ARE PRETTY WORDS, SON. AND IT DOES HAVE A CERTAIN APPEAL...
BUT, HOW ABOUT A COUNTER-OFFER?
HOW ABOUT IF WE KIDNAP AND RANSOM YOU, HMM?

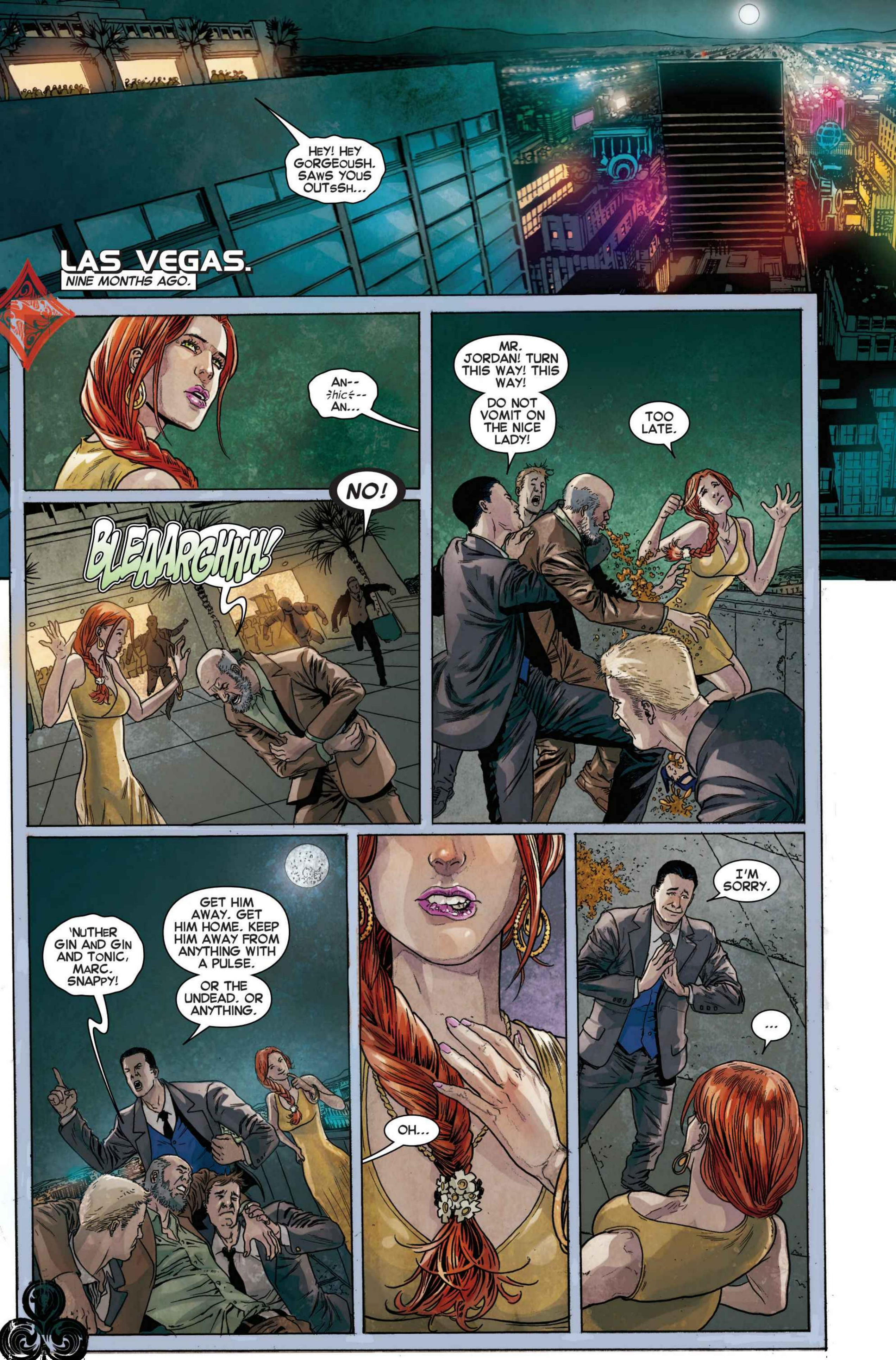

ONE, IT WON'T GET YOU ANY MORE MONEY THAN WHAT I'M OFFERING. AND MONEY CAN'T BUY THE SORT OF EQUIPMENT YOU'LL WALK AWAY WITH.
AT BEST, THIS IS A LONG-TERM PAY-OFF THAT MAKES SENSE FOR YOU.
TWO, IT'LL BE A BIG RISK. THIS ISN'T YOUR USUAL ROB-FROM-THE-RICH-GIVE-TO-THE-FUTURE. PEOPLE CAN RESPECT THAT.
KIDNAPPING ME COULD MAKE PEOPLE VERY ANGRY. SOME OF THEM OWN HIGH-POWERED ROBOT SUITS.
THIRDLY, I DON'T THINK IT'S VERY NICE.
I THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN THAT, ELI.
FOURTHLY, THIS BED HAS A PROTON CANNON BUILT ALONG ITS LENGTH AND CAN DESTROY THE SHIP IF I RAISE AN EYEBROW.
MY EYEBROW, ELI.
NOT YOURS.

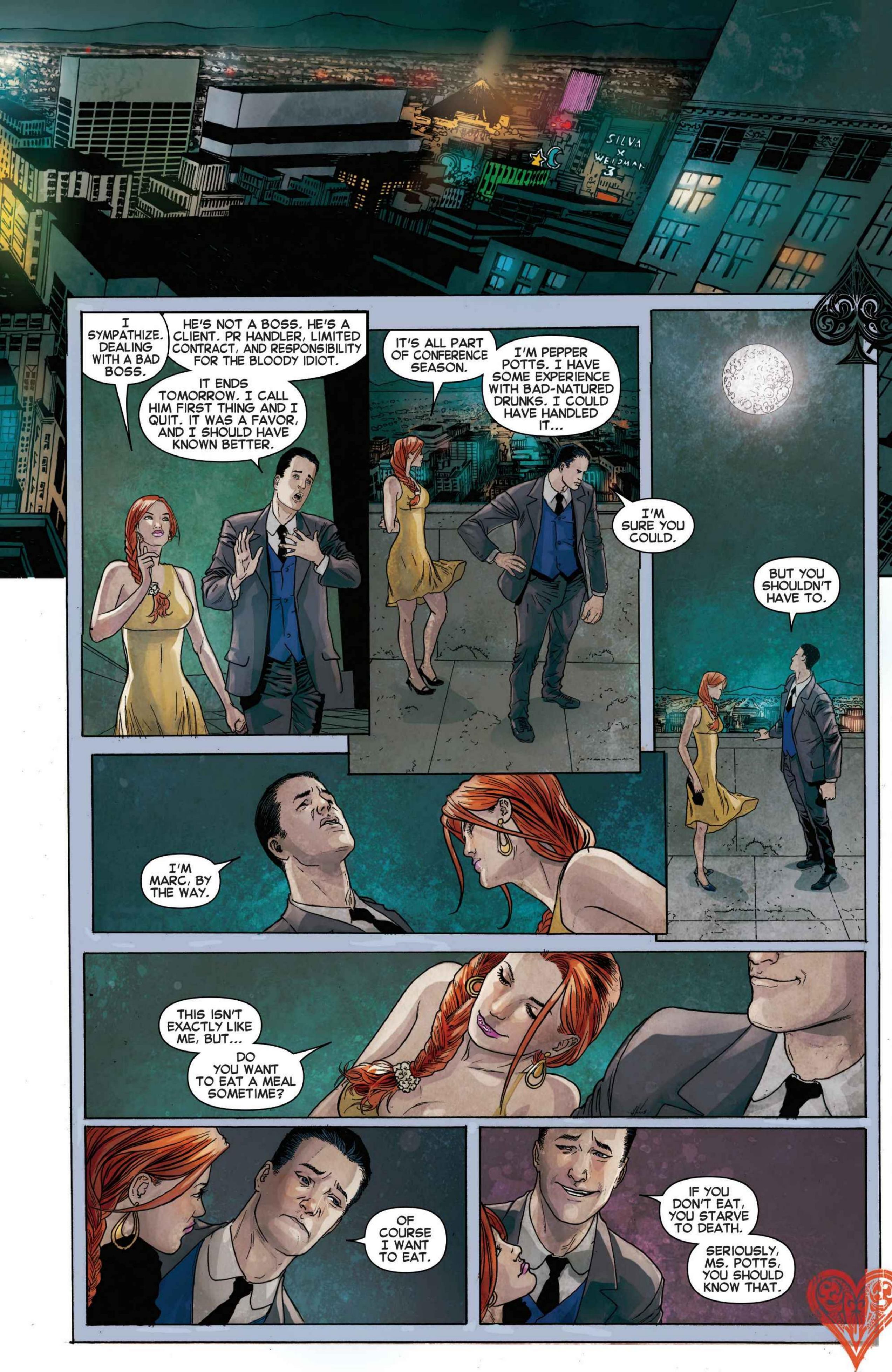

HAHAHAHAHA!
YOU GOT YOURSELF A DEAL.
NOW! ZERO-G SHOTS FOR EVERYONE.
SHAME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED WITH STARK, REALLY.
THE MOON WAS REGRETTABLE ALL AROUND, BUT IT WAS UNSTABLE. IT COULDN'T LAST. TROY WILL.
NO, NOT THE MOON.
EXTREMIS.
THEY NEVER REALLY LET THE FULL DETAILS OUT THERE. IT'S A PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE FOR THE OL' HOMO SAPIENS. IT REINVENTS US FROM THE GROUND UP, ANY WAY WE CHOOSE.
HELL, IT COULD HAVE HAD YOU BACK ON YOUR FEET IN A JIFFY.
ALAS, STARK MADE US BLOODY WELL DESTROY IT.

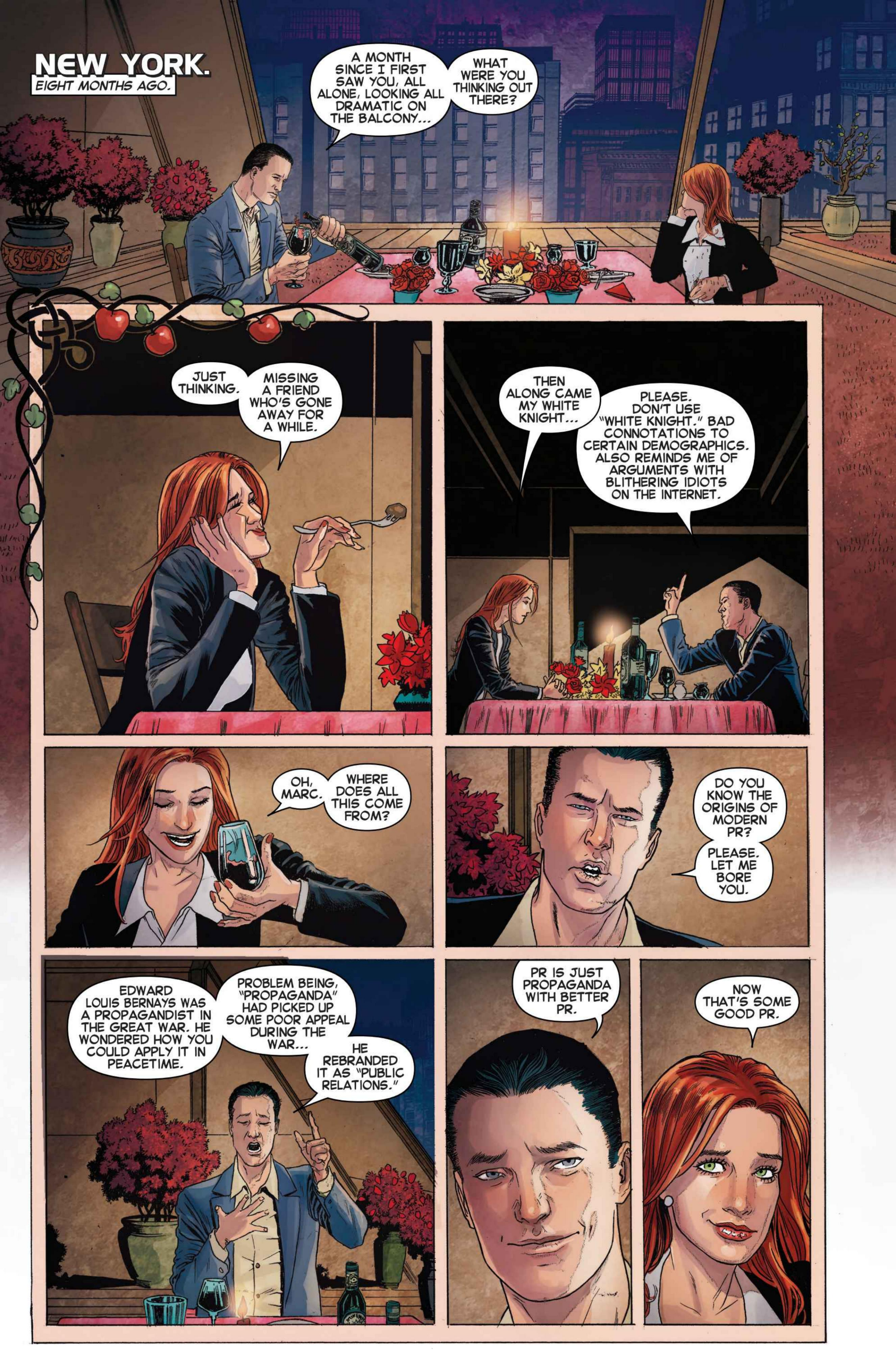

LATER.
THEY'RE IN.
PERFECT. JUST PERFECT. NICE WORK.
ANYTHING INTERESTING?
HMMM...
"...NOTHING *PARTICULARLY* LIFE CHANGING."

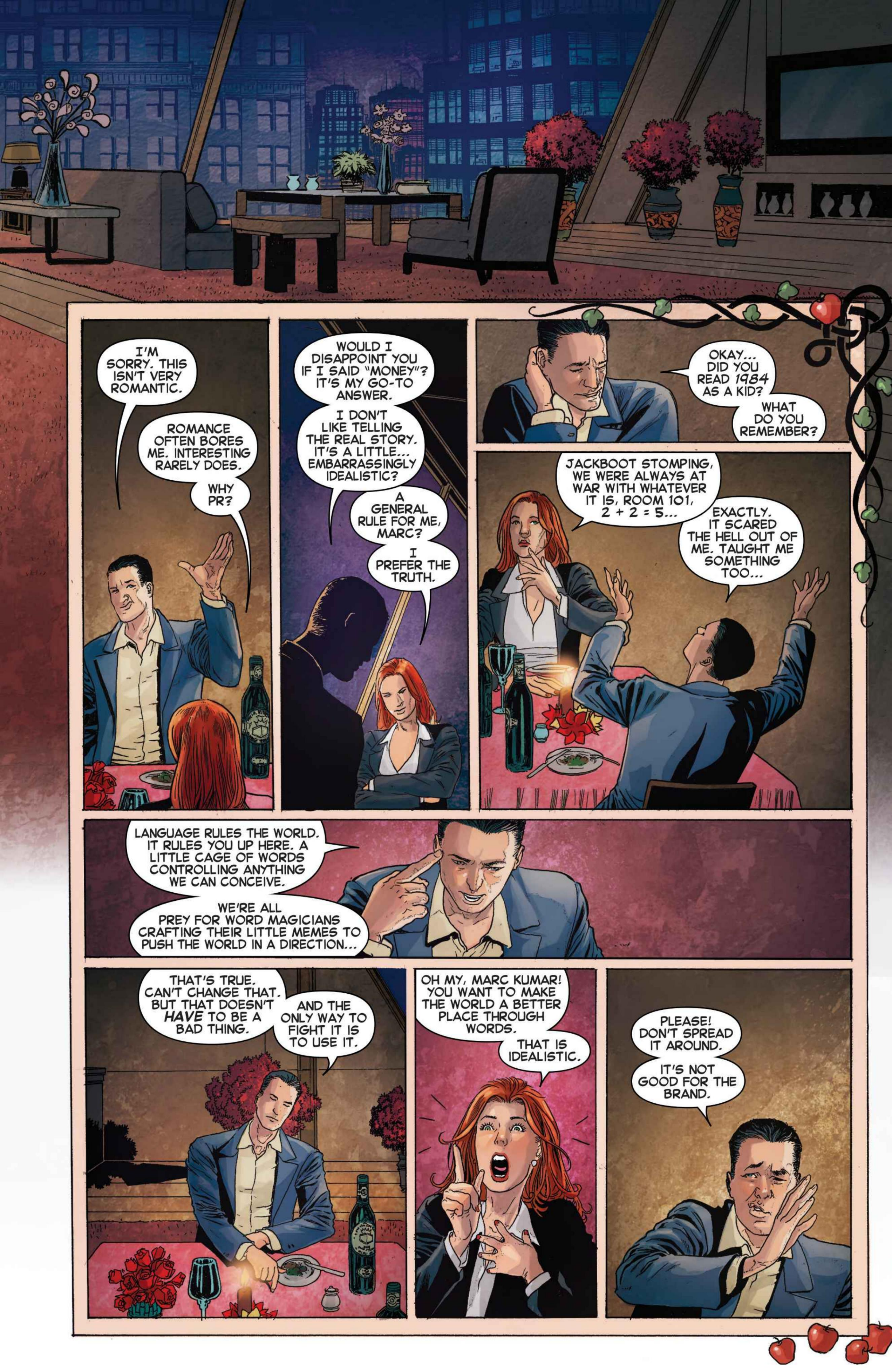
ORBITAL

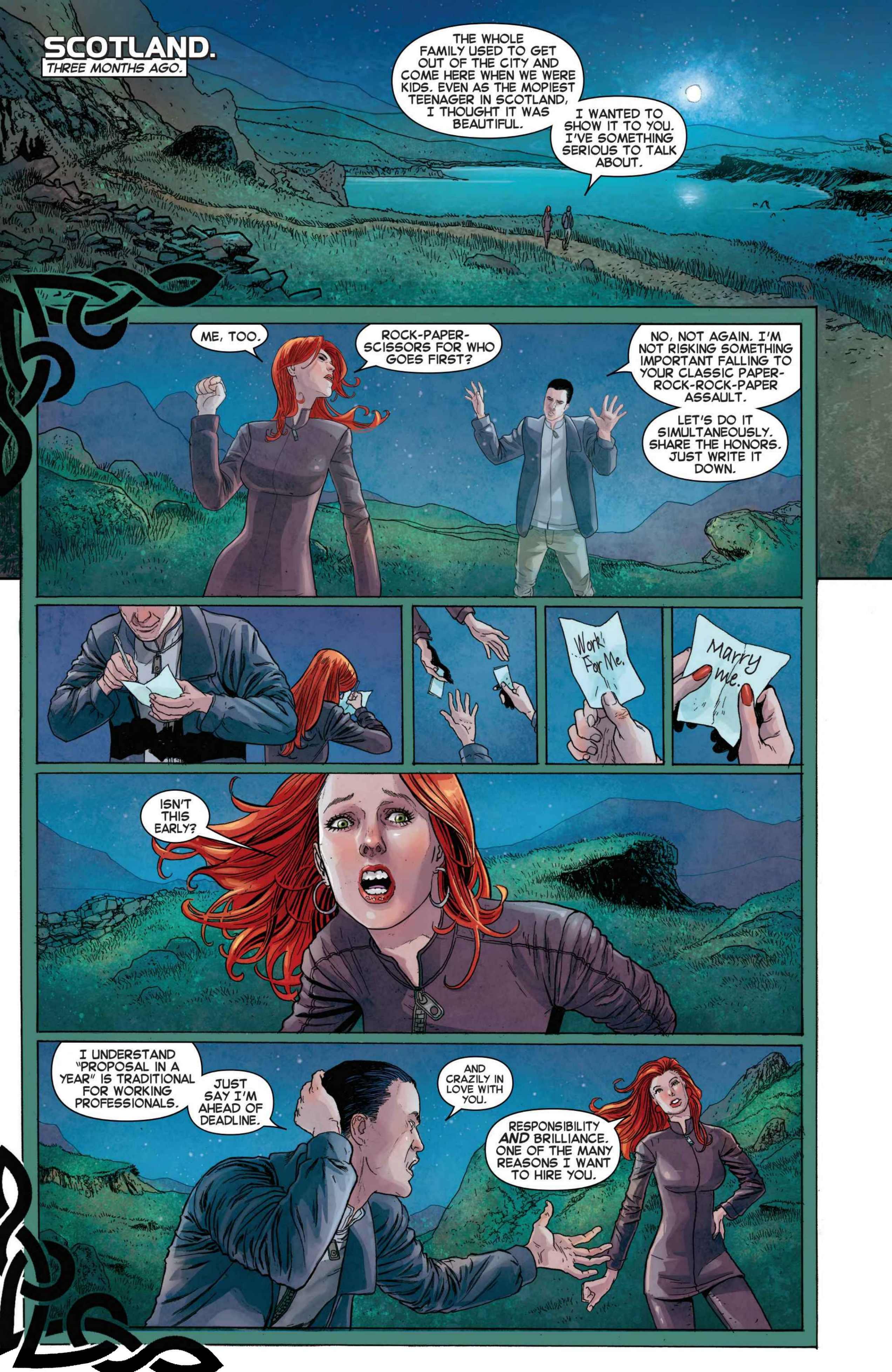
WRITTEN BY KIERON GILLEN PENCILED BY AGUSTIN PADILLA INKED BY SCOTT HANNA
COLORED BY VAL STAPLES LETTERED BY VC's JOE CARAMAGNA

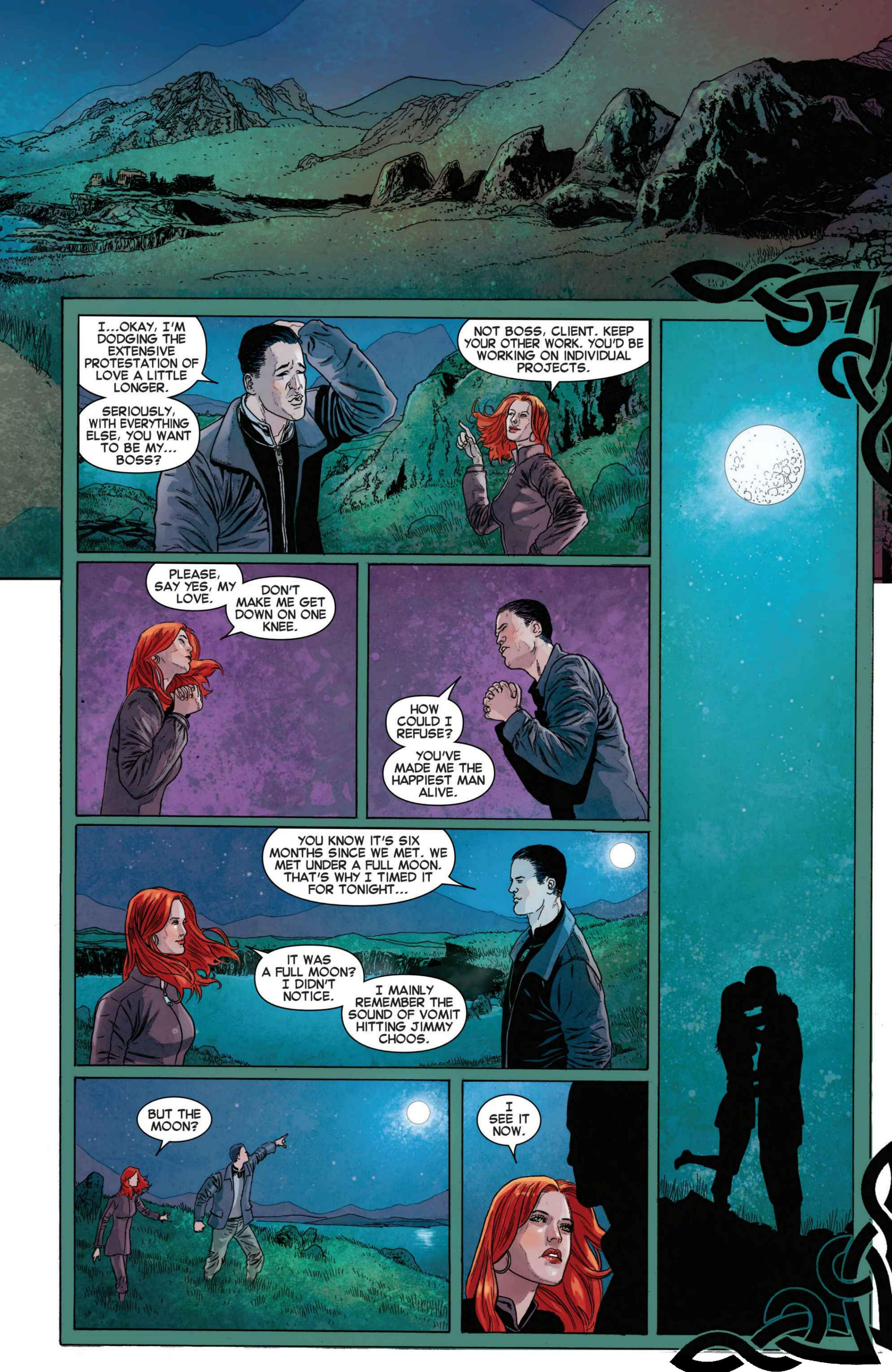

HEY! HEY GORGEOUSH. SAWS YOUS OUTSSH...
LAS VEGAS.
NINE MONTHS AGO.
AN-- *HIC*-- AN...
MR. JORDAN! TURN THIS WAY! THIS WAY!
DO NOT VOMIT ON THE NICE LADY!
TOO LATE.
NO!
BLEAARGHHH!
'NUTHER GIN AND GIN AND TONIC, MARC. SNAPPY!
GET HIM AWAY. GET HIM HOME. KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ANYTHING WITH A PULSE.
OR THE UNDEAD. OR ANYTHING.
OH...
I'M SORRY.
...


SILVA
x
WEIDMA
3
I SYMPATHIZE. DEALING WITH A BAD BOSS.
HE'S NOT A BOSS. HE'S A CLIENT. PR HANDLER, LIMITED CONTRACT, AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BLOODY IDIOT.
IT ENDS TOMORROW. I CALL HIM FIRST THING AND I QUIT. IT WAS A FAVOR, AND I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
IT'S ALL PART OF CONFERENCE SEASON.
I'M PEPPER POTTS. I HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE WITH BAD-NATURED DRUNKS. I COULD HAVE HANDLED IT...
I'M SURE YOU COULD.
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO.
I'M MARC, BY THE WAY.
THIS ISN'T EXACTLY LIKE ME, BUT...
DO YOU WANT TO EAT A MEAL SOMETIME?
OF COURSE I WANT TO EAT.
IF YOU DON'T EAT, YOU STARVE TO DEATH.
SERIOUSLY, MS. POTTS, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT.

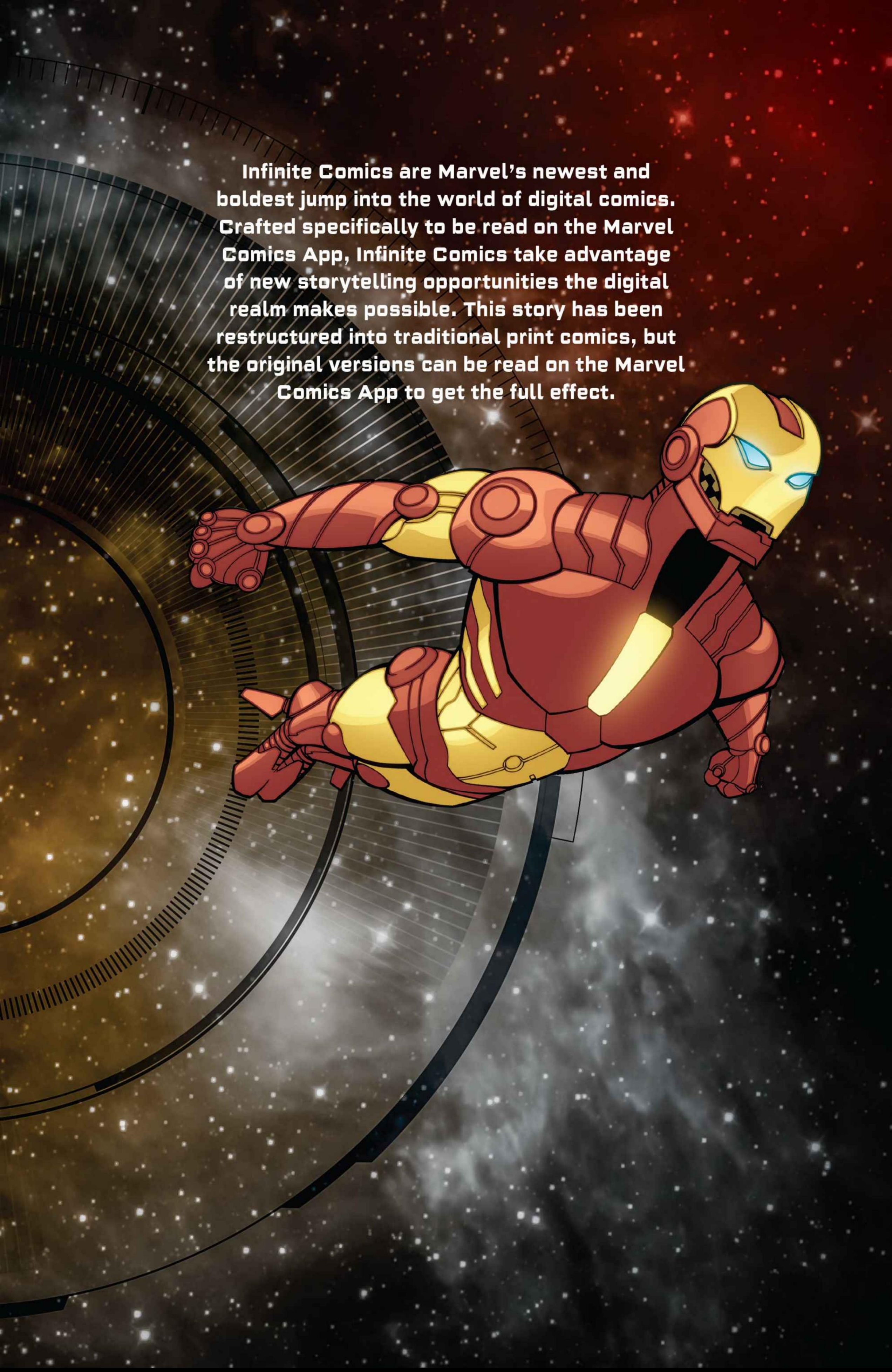

NEW YORK.
EIGHT MONTHS AGO.
A MONTH SINCE I FIRST SAW YOU, ALL ALONE, LOOKING ALL DRAMATIC ON THE BALCONY...
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING OUT THERE?
JUST THINKING.
MISSING A FRIEND WHO'S GONE AWAY FOR A WHILE.
THEN ALONG CAME MY WHITE KNIGHT...
PLEASE. DON'T USE "WHITE KNIGHT." BAD CONNOTATIONS TO CERTAIN DEMOGRAPHICS. ALSO REMINDS ME OF ARGUMENTS WITH BLITHERING IDIOTS ON THE INTERNET.
OH, MARC.
WHERE DOES ALL THIS COME FROM?
DO YOU KNOW THE ORIGINS OF MODERN PR?
PLEASE. LET ME BORE YOU.
EDWARD LOUIS BERNAYS WAS A PROPAGANDIST IN THE GREAT WAR. HE WONDERED HOW YOU COULD APPLY IT IN PEACETIME.
PROBLEM BEING, "PROPAGANDA" HAD PICKED UP SOME POOR APPEAL DURING THE WAR...
HE REBRANDED IT AS "PUBLIC RELATIONS."
PR IS JUST PROPAGANDA WITH BETTER PR.
NOW THAT'S SOME GOOD PR.

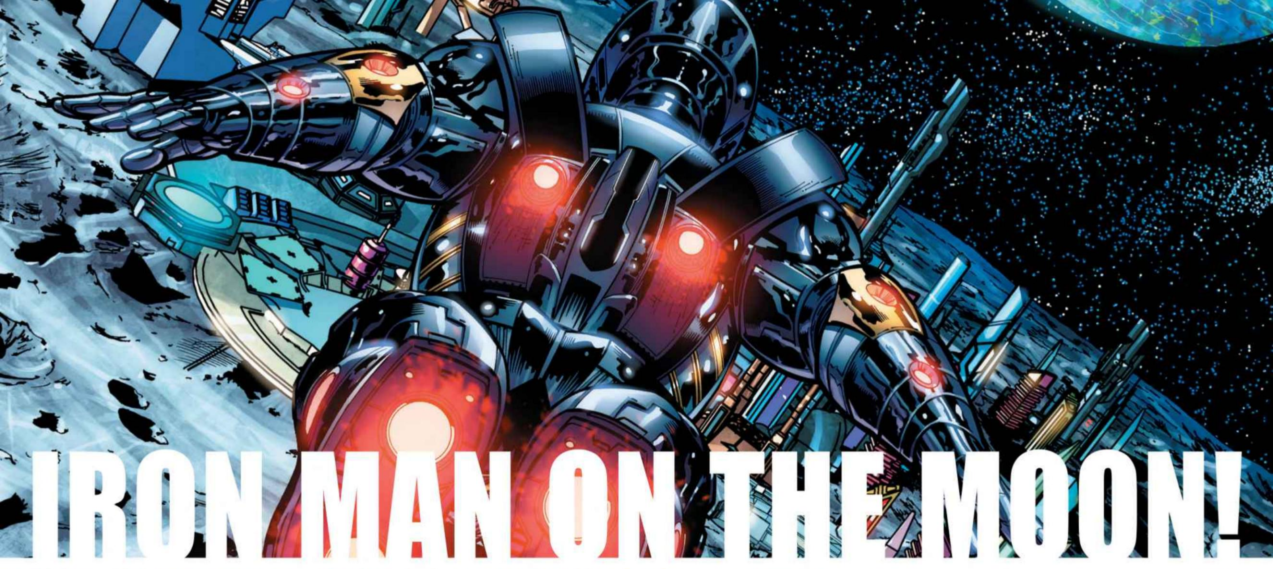

I'M SORRY. THIS ISN'T VERY ROMANTIC.
ROMANCE OFTEN BORES ME. INTERESTING RARELY DOES.
WHY PR?
WOULD I DISAPPOINT YOU IF I SAID "MONEY"? IT'S MY GO-TO ANSWER.
I DON'T LIKE TELLING THE REAL STORY. IT'S A LITTLE... EMBARRASSINGLY IDEALISTIC?
A GENERAL RULE FOR ME, MARC?
I PREFER THE TRUTH.
OKAY... DID YOU READ *1984* AS A KID?
WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?
JACKBOOT STOMPING, WE WERE ALWAYS AT WAR WITH WHATEVER IT IS, ROOM 101, 2 + 2 = 5...
EXACTLY. IT SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME. TAUGHT ME SOMETHING TOO...
LANGUAGE RULES THE WORLD. IT RULES YOU UP HERE. A LITTLE CAGE OF WORDS CONTROLLING ANYTHING WE CAN CONCEIVE.
WE'RE ALL PREY FOR WORD MAGICIANS CRAFTING THEIR LITTLE MEMES TO PUSH THE WORLD IN A DIRECTION...
THAT'S TRUE. CAN'T CHANGE THAT. BUT THAT DOESN'T *HAVE* TO BE A BAD THING.
AND THE ONLY WAY TO FIGHT IT IS TO USE IT.
OH MY, MARC KUMAR! YOU WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE THROUGH WORDS.
THAT IS IDEALISTIC.
PLEASE! DON'T SPREAD IT AROUND.
IT'S NOT GOOD FOR THE BRAND.


SCOTLAND.
THREE MONTHS AGO.
THE WHOLE FAMILY USED TO GET OUT OF THE CITY AND COME HERE WHEN WE WERE KIDS. EVEN AS THE MOPIEST TEENAGER IN SCOTLAND, I THOUGHT IT WAS BEAUTIFUL.
I WANTED TO SHOW IT TO YOU. I'VE SOMETHING SERIOUS TO TALK ABOUT.
ME, TOO.
ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS FOR WHO GOES FIRST?
NO, NOT AGAIN. I'M NOT RISKING SOMETHING IMPORTANT FALLING TO YOUR CLASSIC PAPER-ROCK-ROCK-PAPER ASSAULT.
LET'S DO IT SIMULTANEOUSLY. SHARE THE HONORS. JUST WRITE IT DOWN.
Work For Me.
Marry me.
ISN'T THIS EARLY?
I UNDERSTAND "PROPOSAL IN A YEAR" IS TRADITIONAL FOR WORKING PROFESSIONALS.
JUST SAY I'M AHEAD OF DEADLINE.
AND CRAZILY IN LOVE WITH YOU.
RESPONSIBILITY AND BRILLIANCE. ONE OF THE MANY REASONS I WANT TO HIRE YOU.

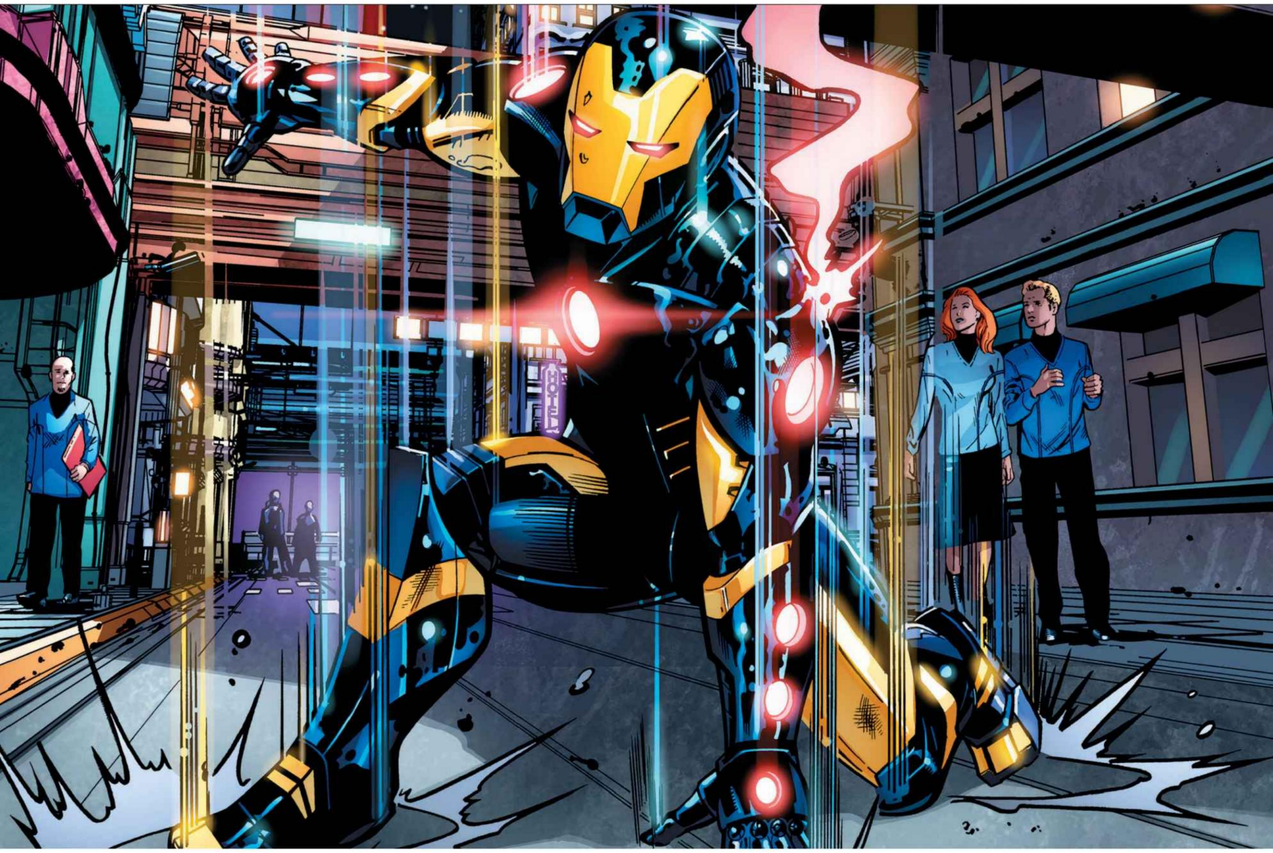

I...OKAY, I'M DODGING THE EXTENSIVE PROTESTATION OF LOVE A LITTLE LONGER.
SERIOUSLY, WITH EVERYTHING ELSE, YOU WANT TO BE MY... BOSS?
NOT BOSS, CLIENT. KEEP YOUR OTHER WORK. YOU'D BE WORKING ON INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS.
PLEASE, SAY YES, MY LOVE.
DON'T MAKE ME GET DOWN ON ONE KNEE.
HOW COULD I REFUSE?
YOU'VE MADE ME THE HAPPIEST MAN ALIVE.
YOU KNOW IT'S SIX MONTHS SINCE WE MET. WE MET UNDER A FULL MOON. THAT'S WHY I TIMED IT FOR TONIGHT...
IT WAS A FULL MOON? I DIDN'T NOTICE.
I MAINLY REMEMBER THE SOUND OF VOMIT HITTING JIMMY CHOOS.
BUT THE MOON?
I SEE IT NOW.

Infinite Comics are Marvel's newest and boldest jump into the world of digital comics. Crafted specifically to be read on the Marvel Comics App, Infinite Comics take advantage of new storytelling opportunities the digital realm makes possible. This story has been restructured into traditional print comics, but the original versions can be read on the Marvel Comics App to get the full effect.





IRON MAN ON THE MOON!



For four decades, mankind has turned its back on the moon. But something was left there. Abandoned and alone, it has been growing. Watching. Waiting for the time to strike. But when the attack reveals a potential solution for all the Earth's energy problems, the moon becomes the new frontier. The incredible element Phlogistone is its precious gold, and Iron Man its self-appointed sheriff. As the Avenging Guardian of the Galaxy heads off-world once again, he finds himself policing an international battle for control of this miraculous resource. With rivals both political and corporate vying to secure it, Stark strives once again to show that — when it comes to shaping the future — Tony knows best. But as the truth dawns about Phlogistone, will it prove Earth's salvation, or will it spell only doom?

Collecting *Iron Man: Fatal Frontier Infinite Comic #1-13* and *Iron Man Annual #1* — written by Al Ewing and Kieron Gillen; and illustrated by Carmine Di Giandomenico, Neil Edwards, Lan Medina, Geoffo and Mast, Alvaro Martinez, Marcos Marz, and Agustin Padilla.

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